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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION).

FOURTH SERIES.

COMMENCING WITH THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

OF THE

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

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VOLUME LXX.

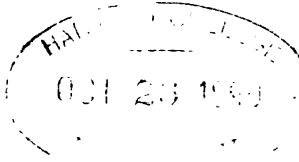
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TO
THE FIFTH DAY OF MAY

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Tea . . . the pound . . . Four Pence.”

INCOME TAX.

2. “That Income Tax shall be charged for the year beginning the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine, at the rate of eightpence.”

Resolutions agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Gentlemen appointed to bring in a Bill upon the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means on the 14th instant, and then agreed to by the House, that they do make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolutions.—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 315

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London Government Bill and Finance Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That after this day the several stages of the London Government Bill and the Finance Bill have precedence of all Orders of the day and Notices of Motions on every day for which the Bills or either of them are appointed.”—(*The First Lord of the Treasury.*)

DEBATE :—

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“At the end of the Question, to add the words ‘except on Wednesday the 17th May.’—(*Mr. Strachey.*)

<i>Mr. Strachey</i> (Somerset, N.)	393	<i>The First Lord of the Treasury</i>	394
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Question proposed—

“That those words be there added.”

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

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Question put—

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Question put—

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The House divided :—Ayes 262 ; Noes 88.—(Division List No. 93.)

Ordered, That after this day the several stages of the London Government Bill and the Finance Bill have precedence of all Orders of the Day and Notices of Motions on every day for which the Bills or either of them are appointed

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AGED DESERVING POOR.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That a Select Committee of Seventeen Members be appointed to consider and report upon the best means of improving the condition of the Aged Deserving Poor, and of providing for those of them who are helpless and infirm; and to inquire whether any of the Bills dealing with Old-Age Pensions, and submitted to Parliament during the present Session, can with advantage be adopted either with or without amendment.”—(*Sir William Walrond.*)

DEBATE:—

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<i>The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.)</i>	413	<i>The Secretary of State for the Colonies</i>	420

Amendment proposed—

“To leave out all after ‘that’ and insert ‘having regard to the fact that a Royal Commission and a Special Committee have within the last four years reported upon the condition of and the providing of pensions for the aged poor, this House considers that further inquiry means unnecessary delay in the fulfilment of these promises of providing old-age pensions for the deserving poor which were made by Members of the Government at the last election.’”—(*Mr. Lambert.*)

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Amendment withdrawn.

Another Amendment proposed—

“To leave out all the words after the word ‘That,’ and add the words, ‘having regard to the fact that a Royal Commission and a Special Committee have within the last four years reported upon the condition of and the providing pensions for the aged poor, this House considers that further inquiry is not likely to shed further light on the subject, and that the Government should undertake the responsibility of making such proposals as they may deem good.’”—(*Mr. Logan.*)

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ARMY ESTIMATES, 1899-1900.

1. “That a sum, not exceeding £1,211,900, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Staff for Engineer Services, and Expenditure for Royal Engineer Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad (including Purchases), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1900” 487
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Parish Churches (Scotland) Bill [H.L.] —Reported from the Standing Committee with further amendments. The Report of the amendments made in Committee of the Whole House and by the Standing Committee to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 54) ...	505
Bodies Corporate (Joint Tenancy) Bill [H.L.] —Reported from the Standing Committee without amendment, and to be read a third time on Thursday next ...	506
Lunacy Bill [H.L.] —Reported from the Standing Committee with a further amendment. The Report of the amendments made in Committee of the Whole House and by the Standing Committee to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 55) ...	506
Land Charges Bill [H.L.] —Reported from the Standing Committee without amendment, and to be read a third time on Thursday next ...	506
Trout Fishing Annual Close Time (Scotland) Bill [H.L.] —House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee ...	506
Copyright Bill [H.L.] —The following Lords were named of the Select Committee:—Lord Chancellor, Earl Dudley, Earl Selborne, Viscount Knutsford, Lord Hatherton, Lord Monkswell, Lord Hobhouse, Lord Thring, Lord Welby, Lord Pirbright. The Committee to meet on Monday next, at Three o'clock, and to appoint their own chairman ...	506
Infectious Disease (Notification) Act (1889) Extension Bill —Read a first time, and to be printed. (No. 56) ...	506
Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill —Read a first time; and to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 57) ...	506

House adjourned at thirty-five minutes after Four of the clock.

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COMMONS: TUESDAY, 25TH APRIL 1899.

North West London Railway Bill —(Queen's Consent Signified)—Read the third time, and passed	507
Bushden and Higham Ferrars District Gas Bill [H.L.]—Read the third time, and passed, without amendment	507
Gas Light and Coke Company Bill —(By Order)—Third Reading deferred till Thursday	507
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Lowestoft Promenade Pier Bill —Read a second time, and committed ...	507
Metropolitan Water Companies Bill —Order [21st March] that the Metropolitan Water Companies Bill be committed, read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn.—(<i>Dr. Farquharson</i>)	507
Wallasey Tramways and Improvements Bill [H.L.]—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed	507
PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F) —Mr. Hargreaves Brown reported from the Committee on Group F of Private Bills. That the parties opposing the London Improvements Bill had stated that the evidence of Robert Vigers, 6, Frederick's Place, Old Jewry, E.C., was essential to their case; and it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Robert Vigers do attend the said Committee To-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the clock. Ordered, That Robert Vigers do attend the Committee on Group F, Private Bills, To-morrow at half-past Eleven of the clock	
PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP II) —Mr. Johnson-Ferguson reported from the Committee on Group H of Private Bills, That, for the convenience of Members, the Committee had adjourned till Thursday next, at half-past Eleven of the clock. Report to lie upon the Table	508
Supreme Court (Appeals) Bill [H.L.]—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday, and to be printed. (Bill 166)	508
Hull, Barnsley and West Riding Junction Railway and Dock Bill [H.L.]—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills	508
South Eastern and London, Chatham and Dover Railway Companies Bill —Reported from the Select Committee. Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. Minutes of Proceedings to be printed. (No. 171) ...	508

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STANDING ORDERS—

Resolutions reported from the Committee—

1. "That, in the case of the West Middlesex Water Bill, Petition for Additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to introduce their Additional Provision, if the Committee on the Bill think fit."
2. "That, in the case of the London United Tramways Bill, Petition for Additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to introduce their Additional Provision, if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

Resolutions agreed to 509

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Hull, Barnsley and West Riding Junction Railway and Dock Company to abandon certain of their authorised works, and to confer further powers upon that Company ; and for other purposes." Hull, Barnsley, and West Riding Junction Railway and Dock Bill [H.L.] 509

BOROUGH FUNDS ACT, 1872—Petitions for alteration of Law ;—From Rawmarsh ;—Itchen ;—and, Barry ; to lie upon the Table 509

Ecclesiastical Assessments (Scotland) Bill—Petition of the Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour ; to lie upon the Table 509

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (CODE OF REGULATIONS FOR DAY SCHOOLS)—Petition from Worcester, against proposed alterations to Articles 33, 37, and 42 ; to lie upon the Table 509

Executors (Scotland) Amendment Bill—Petition of the Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour ; to lie upon the Table 510

Fine or Imprisonment (Scotland and Ireland) Bill—Petition of the Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour ; to lie upon the Table 510

GROUND RENTS (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES)—Petitions in favour ;—From Ashton-under-Lyne ;—Mossley ;—Cardiff ;—Sunderland ; Rawmarsh ;—and, St. Pancras ; to lie upon the Table 510

Infectious Disease (Notification) Act (1889) Extension Bill—Petition from Gainsborough, against ; to lie upon the Table 510

Justices' Disqualification Repeal (Scotland) Bill—Petition of the Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour ; to lie upon the Table 510

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Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Scotland) Bill —Petitions in favour;—From Inverness (two);—Glasgow;—Brechin;—Bowmore;—Leith;—Dunfermline;—Scottish Temperance Association;—Aberdeen;—Kirkholm;—Alloa;—Overton;—Perth;—Comrie;—Irvine;—Broughton;—Carnoustie;—Dunragit;—Kincardineshire;—Ceres;—Leuchars;—and, Edinburgh; to lie upon the Table	510
Local Authorities Servants' Superannuation Bill —Petition from Dewsbury, against; to lie upon the Table	510
Local Authorities Servants' Superannuation Bill —Petitions in favour;—From Norwich;—Clare;—and, Sandown; to lie upon the Table	511
Mines (Eight Hours) Bill —Petitions in favour;—From Nunnery Colliery;—Alfreton;—Ryland's Main;—Blackwell;—Chickenly Heath;—Batley;—North Staveley;—Aldwarke;—Heckmondwike;—Denby;—Woodside;—New Oaks;—Chesterfield;—Alma;—Grassmore;—Millbridge;—Hornthorpes;—Dronfield;—Dunston;—Barlborough;—East Gawber;—Greasborough;—Ormiston;—Oxenford;—Micklefield;—Beeston;—Strafford;—Preston Grange;—Tranent;—Elphingstone;—Panstone;—Northfield;—Heage;—Victoria Colliery;—Home Rule Lodge;—Bond's Main;—and, Woodthorpe; to lie upon the Table	511
Palatine Court of Durham Bill —Petition of the Incorporated Law Society, for alteration; to lie upon the Table	511
Parish Councils Association (Scotland) Bill —Petition from Dundee, in favour; to lie upon the Table	511
PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE —Petition from Leeds, for extension to women; to lie upon the Table	511
Poor Law Officers' Superannuation (Scotland) Bill —Petition from Glasgow, against; to lie upon the Table	511
Rating of Machinery Bill —Petition from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, against; to lie upon the Table	511
Regulation of Railways Bill —Petitions in favour;—From St. Blazey;—Stockport;—Bristol;—Lewes;—Walsall;—Bath;—Swindon;—Tondur;—Llantrissant;—Cheltenham;—Stroud;—Barry;—Accrington;—Chesterfield;—Ramsbottom;—Morpeth;—Todmorden;—Crewe;—Aintree;—Skipton;—Rugby;—Wellingborough;—Wellington;—and, Colwick; to lie upon the Table	512
ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND —Petitions against establishment;—From Dunfermline;—Edinburgh;—Rothsay;—and, Oban; to lie upon the Table	512
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill —Petitions in favour;—From Puddletown;—Nacton;—Alveston;—Rochdale;—and, Southlands; to lie upon the Table	512

HI!

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION)

EDITED BY A. KAPADIA.

IN THE

FIFTH SESSION OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, APPOINTED
TO MEET THE 7TH FEBRUARY 1899, IN THE 62ND YEAR OF THE
REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

FIFTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1899.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 20th April 1899.

The LORD CHANCELLOR took his
seat upon the Woolsack at Four of the
clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

WORKINGTON CORPORATION WATER
BILL [H.L.]

(Petition for additional Provision).
The meeting of the Standing Orders
Committee (which stands appointed
for Monday next) put off to Monday the
1st of May next.

YORKE ESTATE.

Petition for a Private Bill; together
with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed
thereto; read, and referred to two Eng-
lish Judges.

VOL. LXX.

[FOURTH SERIES.]

PORTSMOUTH CORPORATION BILL [H.L.]

Petition for additional provision; of
the Corporation of Portsmouth; to-
gether with proposed amendment and
clause annexed thereto; read, and re-
ferred to the Examiners.

CLYDE NAVIGATION BILL [H.L.]

Witnesses ordered to attend the Select
Committee.

BARTON-ON-SEA WATER BILL [H.L.]

A witness ordered to attend the
Select Committee.

KEW BRIDGE BILL [H.L.]

Committee to meet To-morrow.

MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR BOARD (PILOTAGE) BILL [H.L.]

The Chairman of Committees in-
formed the House that the opposition to
the Bill was withdrawn. The order
made on the 27th of February last dis-
charged; and Bill committed.

A

BURY CORPORATION BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, no parties having appeared in opposition thereto; read, and ordered to lie on the Table; The orders made on the 27th of February and the 24th of March last discharged; and Bill committed.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (ABERAVON, ETC.) BILL [H.L.]

To be read a second time To-morrow.

NORFOLK ESTUARY BILL [H.L.]

The Queen's consent signified; and Bill reported with Amendments.

HULL, BARNSELY, AND WEST RIDING JUNCTION RAILWAY AND DOCK BILL [H.L.]

Reported with Amendments.

METROPOLITAN WATER COMPANIES BILL.

Brought from the Commons.

PARISH COUNCILS (TENURE OF OFFICE) BILL.

Brought from the Commons.

CENTRAL LONDON RAILWAY BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read a first time; and referred to the Examiners.

VALE OF GLAMORGAN RAILWAY BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read a first time; and referred to the Examiners.

Church Stretton Water Bill [H.L.]**Cobham Gas Bill [H.L.]****Gainsborough Urban District Council (Gas) Bill [H.L.]****Leigh-on-Sea Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]****St. Neot's Water Bill [H.L.]****Hastings and St. Leonards Gas Bill [H.L.]****Hastings Corporation Tramways Bill [H.L.]****Bexhill and St. Leonards Tramroads Bill [H.L.]****Newhaven and Seaford Water Board Bill [H.L.]****South Essex Water Bill [H.L.]**

Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; namely, E. Carnwath, E. Romney, L. Colchester, L. Loch (chairman), L. Wandsworth.

Agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Tuesday next, at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

Grosvenor Chapel (London) Bill [H.L.]**All Saints' Church (Cardiff) Bill [H.L.]****Skipton Urban District Gas Bill [H.L.]****Skipton Gas Bill [H.L.]****Dundee Gas, Tramways, and Extension Bill [H.L.]****Aberdeen Joint Passenger Station Bill [H.L.]****Llanelly Harbour and Pontardulais Railway Bill [H.L.]****Port Talbot Railway and Docks Bill [H.L.]****Wishaw Water Bill [H.L.]**

Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select

Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.),

E. Clarendon,
E. Orford,
V. Bangor,
L. Wenlock (chairman),
L. Cranworth;

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet on Tuesday next, at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills, to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

GREENOCK AND PORT GLASGOW TRAMWAYS BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Select Committee with Amendments.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Return showing the expenditure from the grant for public education in Scotland in the year 1898, upon annual grants to State-aided schools; the number of schools; the results of inspection and examination during the year ended 30th September 1898.

TREATY SERIES, No. 7 (1899).

Exchange of Notes extending to Queensland the provisional *modus vivendi* between the United Kingdom and Belgium pending the conclusion of a treaty of commerce and navigation between the two countries, 6th February 1899.

MINES AND QUARRIES.

Reports of Her Majesty's Inspectors, for the year 1898.

TRADE REPORTS.

Annual Series: Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance:

No. 2225. Greece (The Piræus);
No. 2226. Poland and Lithuania;
No. 2227. Belgium;
No. 2228. China (Pakhoi);
No. 2229. Colombia (Panama);
No. 2230. Turkey (Trebizond);
No. 2231. Italy (Lombardy).

MERCHANT SHIPPING (DESERTION OF SEAMEN).

Reports from certain foreign and colonial ports respecting the desertion of seamen from British ships.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

POLICE (COUNTIES AND BOROUGHES) (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Reports of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary, for the year ended 29th September 1898.

CERTIFIED INEBRIATE REFORMATORIES.

Rules made by the Secretary of State for the domestic management of the certified inebriate reformatory at Brentry, in the county of Gloucester.

ALKALI, ETC., WORKS REGULATION ACTS, 1881 AND 1882.

Thirty-fourth Annual Report on alkali, etc., works, by the Chief Inspector, during the year 1898.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

THAMES CONSERVANCY.

General Report of the Conservators of the River Thames, from 1st January 1898 to 31st December 1898, with a statement of the accounts of the Conservators for the year ended 31st December 1898.

Delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PETITIONS.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS.

Petitions against the sale of, on Sundays;—of the inhabitants of Balshan in the county of Cambridgeshire;—of the inhabitants of Eastbourne in the county of Sussex;—of the inhabitants of Brandon in the County of Suffolk;—Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

NEW DAY SCHOOL CODE.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, I had given notice to-day to move to resolve, that in the opinion of this House the paragraph introduced at the end of article 37 in the New Day School Code, limiting the number of pupil teachers, ought to be omitted; as also the alteration of article 42 to the same effect. As the whole matter has already been settled, with the consent of the Government, I do not intend to move this Motion.

TROUT FISHING ANNUAL CLOSE TIME
SCOTLAND BILL [H.L.]

House to be in Committee on Tuesday next.

MONEY-LENDING BILL.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Seeing that my noble Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy is in his place, I should like to ask him if he is in a position to inform the House when it is likely that the Committee stage of the Money-Lending Bill, of which he has charge, will be taken?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Lord JAMES OF HERFORD): There have necessarily been many Amendments to prepare, but I propose to take the Committee stage on Monday week, if that is convenient to the House.

ST. ANDREWS BURGH PROVISIONAL
ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL [H.L.]

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without amendment: Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read third time to-morrow.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That this Bill be read a second time."—
(The Secretary of State for War.)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The Marquess of LANSDOWNE): My Lords, the only changes in the law which this Bill makes are those contained in clause 4 and the following clauses. Under the present law, the Secretary of State has powers to make orders for the transfer to workhouses and lunatic asylums of lunatic soldiers and their wives and families. He has also power to make orders for the maintenance of soldiers, their wives and families, and their illegitimate children. The change which we propose to make is that of transferring the power of making these orders from the Secretary of State to the general officer commanding the district. We recommend that change as consistent with a policy which we have adopted of transferring to local military authorities, where it is possible to do so consistently with public interests, functions which are now, as we believe unnecessarily, exercised at headquarters. The 5th clause removes doubts which have arisen as to the effect of the Madras and Bombay Armies Act, passed in 1893. Your Lordships may remember that under that Act the powers of the Commander-in-Chief of Madras and Bombay were transferred to lieutenant-generals, who are placed in command of districts. It was intended to transfer to lieutenant-generals of districts the powers possessed by the commanders-in-chief of those districts, but, by an accident, that transfer was not completely made, and the generals of districts have not, under the law as it now stands, power to reduce or commute a sentence, to make orders as to deserters, or to reduce non-commissioned officers. The clause remedies that omission, and restores this power to the general officers of districts. I think these are the only points I need

explain to your Lordships, and I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Question put.

Bill read a second time.

Standing Orders Nos. 39 and 45 dispensed with.

Bill read a third time.

LUNACY BILL.

House in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 20 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

On clause 21.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: My Lords, I was unfortunately unable, on account of indisposition, to be present when this Bill was read a second time, but I am very glad to understand that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack held out some hope, in moving the Second Reading, that if objections were taken to the change in the law in respect of pensions and allowances to officers and servants of asylums proposed in this Bill, he would not be unwilling to reconsider the proposal. It will be within the recollection of the noble and learned Lord that last year I ventured to protest against this clause, which provides that the visiting committee of every asylum shall grant superannuations to such of their officers and servants as are engaged in the care or treatment of lunatics, and that it shall be the duty of the county council to confirm the grants so made, and I took a Division upon it. I was not successful, although I had considerable support, but I cannot say that the year which has passed has in any way reconciled either me, or those for whom I act, in regard to the change which the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack proposes to make in the law. I confess I fail to understand the wisdom of further restricting the powers of county councils. Already, as your Lordships know, they have a very limited power over a large part of their expenditure, and this clause proposes to impose further restrictions upon them in regard to pensions and allowances to

officers and servants of lunatic asylums. From 1888 up to the present time county councils have enjoyed the right of determining for themselves whether they will grant pensions or not. I do not know what may be the case in other counties, but in the county with which I have the honour to be connected—namely, the West Riding of Yorkshire—the county council some years ago passed a resolution that they would not grant pensions to their officers, on the understanding that their servants should be paid larger salaries than would be the case if they were to be entitled to superannuations, and they have acted upon that resolution ever since. I am of opinion that this question of granting pensions is one which distinctly falls within the proper functions of a county council. Some county councils may grant these pensions, and others may object to do so, but it will be within the recollection of many of your Lordships that upon the question of principle, when it was discussed last year, the County Councils Association, which, to a great extent, represents the county councils of the country, took exception to this clause, and asked your Lordships to reject it, and to leave county councils in the position they have occupied with reference to this matter since their creation in 1888. I do not propose to trouble your Lordships with a Division on this occasion. I reserve any step which I may consider it necessary to take, but I do most earnestly hope the noble and learned Lord will withdraw this clause, which is regarded by the majority of the county councils in this country as an infringement of their discretion in withdrawing powers which they have, up to this time, possessed, and which I venture to say they have in no way abused. I would ask the noble and learned Lord to consider what will be the position in which the county council of the West Riding of Yorkshire will be placed if this clause is passed. That county council, as I have said, have for several years past given good salaries upon the understanding that there will be no pensions. That is to say, they have gone into the market, and have given probably higher salaries than they would otherwise have done if the officers were to be entitled at the end of their term of service to a pen-

sion. If your Lordships pass this Resolution, in what position will you place the county council of the West Riding of Yorkshire in regard to their officers and their servants, who have taken employment under these circumstances? You will give them the higher rate of salary which they have obtained, because there were to be no pensions, and you will give them pensions as well. I am sure this is not a condition which would be fair either to the county council or to the officers and servants of that council. It might, of course, be possible, in regard to some of these officers, to force upon them a reduction of salary in consideration of the granting of the pension, but that would be a very undesirable step to take, and yet it almost seems that you would force the county council into that position unless they are prepared to spend more of the ratepayers' money than they would be justified in spending. Therefore, I hope the noble and learned Lord who has charge of this Bill will be able to say that this clause will not be proceeded with. I can assure him that the feeling on the subject is, or, at any rate, was last year, very decided, and that if he presses the clause, he must look to opposition both here and in the other House.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (The Earl of HALSBURY): My Lords, I am not certain that it was necessary for the noble Marquess to state at such length the objection he has to this clause. I can at once announce that I do not propose to persist in this clause, but it must not be supposed that there is not another side to the question than that stated by the noble Marquess. The noble Marquess says his mind has not been altered since last year. Neither has mine. I entertain a strong opinion that the question of the discipline of lunatic asylums and the question of pensions to officials, who should not be employed in these asylums for too long a time, are matters of Imperial concern. I quite feel, after the veiled threat of opposition both in this House and elsewhere which the noble Marquess was able to make, that it would be very undesirable, in what is otherwise a non-contentious Bill, to encounter any opposition, and if the noble Marquess moves to omit the clause, I shall not oppose the Motion.

Marquess of Ripon.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I cannot help expressing my satisfaction that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack will not persevere with this clause. I share entirely the opinion of my noble Friend in his opposition to the clause. With the exception of some subsidies granted by the Government, the whole of the expenses of lunatic asylums are provided out of the rates, and it would be extremely unfair if the persons who bear the cost have not some control over the lunatic asylums. The matter is carried very far indeed already. With regard to pensions and allowances, there is no class of officers whose duties are more onerous than the officers of lunatic asylums, or who are more deserving of generous consideration in the matter of salaries and pensions; but I think the county councils are well able to exercise a wise discretion in the matter.

Amendment proposed—

“That clause 21 be omitted.”

Amendment agreed to.

Motion made and Question proposed—

“That clause 22 be omitted from the Bill.”

Motion agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Bill reported to the House.

SUPREME COURT (APPEALS) BILL [H.L.]

Read third time (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

LAND CHARGES BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That this Bill be read a second time.”—
(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, this is a Bill which passed through the House without the slightest opposition last Session, but which was lost owing to there not being time to get it through the other House. The object of the Bill is to amend the law relating to charges on land, by giving fuller effect

to the policy of the Land Charges Registration and Searches Act, 1888, under which purchasers of land are protected from certain risks against which they formerly had no protection.

Question put.

Bill read a second time.

ILLICIT SECRET COMMISSIONS BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That this Bill be read a first time.”

***LORD RUSSELL OF KILLOWEN:** My Lords, I rise to call your Lordships' attention to the pernicious practice of the gift and receipt of illicit secret commissions, and having done so, I shall ask your Lordships' leave to introduce a Bill dealing with the subject. I recognise that the responsibility rests upon me of satisfying your Lordships in the first place that this is a serious evil, and that it is of so grave a character as to justify and require a legislative remedy; and, in the second place, I have to satisfy your Lordships that the Bill which I propose for your acceptance, if it does not remove, will, at all events, offer a fair prospect of substantially diminishing the evil at which it is aimed. My Lords, this is not the first, nor the second, nor the third time that public attention has been called to this question. Bills, of a more or less incomplete or drastic character, dealing with the subject, have been introduced. As far back as 1877 “The Times” newspaper published an article, one passage from which I shall ask leave to read, in reference to the correspondence on the matter which had appeared in the columns of that journal, in the course of which it says:—

“First came solicitors, accused of betraying the trust of their employers, and leaguings with third parties to divide fees to which they had no sort of just claim. Then followed bankers, auctioneers, architects, insurance agents, and accountants. There does not seem, in short, to be any end to the ramification of this canker, which has grown to such a height as to threaten the extinction of honest plain-dealing altogether. It may be traced, indeed, through a much wider ramification than the correspondence we have published has as yet disclosed, and through all shades of questionableness, from direct bribery of the most cor-

rupt kind, such as that of the architect or engineer, who receives douceurs from the contractors and tradesmen, whom he is bound to overlook, to the more venial, but still not justifiable, gifts or ‘discounts,’ or ‘half-commissions,’ which nominally unpaid agents, such as bankers, may receive from a broker.”

The article then proceeds to suggest that Parliament should deal with the matter by legislation. My Lords, again and again learned judges on the Bench have animadverted on the pernicious character of the evil to which I am referring, and, indeed, what has induced me to pay particular attention to it has been my own personal experience, largely professional, in part judicial, in the matter. Accordingly, I have been at some pains in drafting a Bill, in conjunction with Sir Edward Fry, a man known to this House as one who rendered distinguished judicial service to the country, and who, like a great many others, has been impressed by the necessity of doing something effective at least to mitigate the evil. The first point which I will deal with is whether the evil is really widespread and serious. There is within reach of your Lordships, if not in your Lordships' hands, a Report by the London Chamber of Commerce, whose efforts in this matter, and the trouble it has taken to obtain evidence, under circumstances of extreme difficulty, are worthy of all praise, and I might indeed almost justify my contention on this part of the subject by reading to your Lordships one or two of the conclusions of the Special Committee of the Chamber of Commerce:—

“Your Committee conclude from the evidence before them that secret commissions in various forms are prevalent in almost all trades and professions to a great extent, and that in some trades the practice has increased, and is increasing, and they are of opinion that the practice is producing great evil, alike to the morals of the commercial community and to the profits of honest traders.”

“Bribes in all forms, including secret commissions, owe their existence sometimes to the desire of the donor to obtain the assistance of the donee; sometimes to the demand expressed or implied of the donee that the bribe shall be given.”

“In the first class of cases your Committee have reason to believe that the bribe is often given unwillingly and with a pang of conscience, as the result of the keen competition in trade, and in the fear, too often well-founded, that unless given, other less scrupulous rivals will obtain an advantage; many cases have

come before your Committee in which traders have believed (often, though not perhaps always, without reason) that their entire failure to obtain orders has been due to the want of a bribe."

"The second class of cases are those in which the recipient extorts the bribe from those who have established business relations with his principal. This practice is rendered more effective and oppressive by a combination between the blackmailers. The servant or agent who demands a commission and fails to receive it, not infrequently warns his fellows in the same position in the trade against the honest trader, who thus finds himself shut out from dealings with a whole circle of firms."

Then the Committee proposed to consider the question of dealing with the matter by legislation, and, although recognising the difficulty of doing so, urge the necessity of adopting legislative measures. I propose to read to your Lordships one or two of the illustrative cases set out in the appendix of this Report. A member of the Institute of Mining Engineers wrote:

"In some cases architects, engineers, and lawyers, in addition to their professional fees, expect a fee or payment in some form from builders, contractors, and investment companies. They are bound to pay them, or go without further orders. The only way to stop the pernicious practice is for the large professions to prevent their members from accepting these commissions."

A pharmaceutical chemist stated that:—

"Secret commissions are given by chemists to medical men on their prescriptions supplied to patients, in some cases amounting to from 25 to 50 per cent. on the price charged by the dispensing chemist."

It was also proved that doctors handed to the sorrowing widow an undertaker's card, and received a percentage of 10 to 20 per cent. on the funeral charges, though I should be sorry if your Lordships were to suppose that I believe this practice is general among medical men. There is no profession which renders more noble and freely gratuitous public service than the medical profession, and it is in the interests of that profession that the black sheep among them should be driven from the flock. A case came before the courts a little time ago, in which a company had been formed for the sale, in part, of some kind of medicated wine, said to be useful for particular diseases, and in which it was shown that founders' shares were distributed

amongst doctors upon the terms that the doctors were to puff the wares of the company. The Report then goes on to deal with cases of electrical and mechanical engineering, and one witness says:—

"I have come in contact with several cases most prejudicial to the healthy development of trade generally, chiefly among the London engineers, who specify for particular makes of articles, and that everything shall be to their approval, in order to be able to press the contractors for money. Then there are consulting engineers of the highest standing and above all suspicion, but in whose offices there are men who, unknown to their employers, receive indirectly or directly commissions, and who levy blackmail on the contractors."

Another case is that of a steward on a large estate who gives particulars of discounts and commissions having been received. In another case, in which a gunsmith supplied the owner of an estate with guns and ammunition, it came to the knowledge of the master that his gamekeeper had been in the habit of receiving considerable bribes in the shape of commission. He wrote to the gunmaker and expostulated with him. The gunmaker replied that on the terms the owner of the estate suggested he must decline to supply him. The explanation he gave was, that if the servants were not bribed the guns would be represented as unsatisfactory, and objection would also be taken to the ammunition. Then the Report goes on to give illustrations relating to the cutlery trade. In this trade, it is stated that:—

"The mischievous practice has done a great deal of harm to the proprietors of houses in London especially. The mode of levying blackmail goes right through in some houses, even to the boy who takes in the manufacturer's card to the buyer, their civility and attention having to be paid for by the unfortunate traveller. The mischief is very far spread."

One witness said he had lost scores of orders through refusing to bribe, and added that the system of bribery that they had to contend against in London existed to an alarming extent, and if it were not stopped it would be impossible for honest men to do business. The system also prevails in regard to tin-plate workers and japanners. A Birmingham merchant wrote, calling attention to the same practice and a large wholesale warehouseman said:—

"The abuse you are endeavouring to modify, if not eradicate, is a hydra-headed monster, whose operations are conducted underground and difficult to unearth."

Lord Russell of Killowen.

Then I come to a case on which I would ask your Lordships' permission to dwell for one moment. It relates to the trade of dyeing in Yorkshire. One agent writes:—

"It would not be too much to say that there are firms of very prosperous dyers whose every account depends on bribery. It so permeates the trade that we cannot stop it. Dyes, which are worse than useless, are palmed upon the manufacturer to make up a respectable bribe to the men."

A woollen cloth manufacturer and dyer said:—

"I saw at once that unless I bribed the dyers I could do little or nothing. Dyers simply take the one they are paid secretly the most to use. Dyers, I hear, have 3d. per bag (1 cwt.) off logwood. Anyone who omits this cannot sell logwood. I know two honest men driven out of the trade. The Germans are the worst bribers. I had several vats I was trying for manufacturers deliberately spoilt because I would not bribe the men."

One of the most painful experiences which I have had professionally was at the Leeds Assizes, where I had to defend an old man, who had been in business for something like 50 years. He was a member of the local corporation. His son was succeeding him in business. He was charged at the Assize Court with having entered into a conspiracy with Lord Masham's foreman dyer to defraud Lord Masham, who is the head of a silk manufactory in Bradford, by invoicing goods which were never delivered, by invoicing inferior goods and charging the price of higher-class goods, and, occasionally, when they sent the best goods, by charging an excessive price for them. When I saw my client and his solicitor, I said: "If the evidence as on the depositions comes out, the case is hopeless. How could a man holding a respectable position, and so long before the public, be a party to such transactions?" His explanation was a very pathetic one. He said he could not help it; that he was driven to it. It began first with small commissions, but gradually the screw was turned on, and his trade profit would have disappeared altogether if he had not fallen in with the arrangement. I asked him if he could not have gone to Lord Masham, and told him. He said he could, but the result would have been that the foreman would have been dismissed and another man put in his place, and, if he had not made an

arrangement with the new foreman, that man, when a vat containing perhaps £220 or £300 worth of stuff was in the process of dyeing, would have put some noxious stuff into the vat, and would have said to Lord Masham, "See the kind of drugs you are using. You will have to change your drug merchant." I do not believe that is at all an isolated case. A number of witnesses drew attention to the prevalence of bribery in the case of buyers for large houses and co-operative companies; also in the calico trade, the publishing trade, and the printing trade. I am sorry to say that the latter is one of the worst cases of all. I have had a letter from the representative of a large firm of dealers in ink, colour, and varnishes. He says:—

"A certain newspaper in the provinces allowed their machine overseer to order inks, with the result that we had to pay this man 5s. per drum, so as to get the orders. When the price of inks fell, so as to make the 5s. per drum too heavy a proportion to allow us a profit, the man suggested that we should send smaller drums, as they were not weighed.

"A machine overseer called last week and said he was going to a new situation, and we must give him £2, as he had lost every penny (we think when drunk), otherwise he would not recommend our inks at his new place.

"A manager of a large lithographic printers borrowed £20 from our traveller, and gave out orders for printing ink upon which he had 10 per cent. commission till the loan was cleared off."

"A foreman who used our inks, on which he levied 1d. per pound, which he called "Chapel Money," regretted that he could not now use so much as formerly, as his employer had put in a gas engine in place of a boiler driven by steam, so there was no furnace in which he could get rid of any ink."

The expression "Chapel money" perhaps needs a word of explanation. The phrase in the printing trade comes down, I believe, from the time of Caxton, who first printed in a crypt of Westminster Abbey. To this day, on the composing staff in a printing office, there is a member who is known as the "Father of the Chapel." The writer of the letter, from which I have just quoted, says that the acceptance of ink or machinery depends, except in cases where men look after their own business, not upon the excellence of the things, nor their price, but upon the amount of the bribes that are given. I have here original demands from over-

seers for Christmas-boxes, which are to be sent to them privately, and in some of these cases sums amounting to £25 have been paid. The Report also states that the practice prevails in the brewing trade, bribes being given to butlers, also to coachmen, gamekeepers, and even gardeners. With regard to the coal trade, there are in your Lordships' House noble Lords who are coal proprietors, and who, I hope, will give us the benefit of their experience, so that we may know what should be done in that trade to prevent this kind of thing. I had a remarkable experience in a case which at the time attracted a great deal of attention, and which had its grave and tragic, as well as its ludicrous side. I mean the case of the gas corporation in Salford, where the gas manager, having been charged by one Mr. Ellis Lever with such an offence—namely, insisting on bribes—prosecuted Lever criminally for a libel. It was proved at the time that he had taken bribes. It turned out, however, that Ellis Lever was in the best possible position to know that the man had taken bribes, as he had for years given them himself. I will read another passage from the Report of the Special Committee:—

“At the first meeting of the Committee on the 2nd of February, a member, who is a wholesale merchant, stated that commissions were not so often asked for as expected, and that if the commission or bribe was not forthcoming, the account either diminished or was closed. The difficulty was to prove anything. In the export trade there was the pernicious practice of allowing a so-called trade discount. Frequently two invoices were asked for, and some traders even requested to be supplied with extra blank invoice forms.”

My Lords, I will make allusion also to the case of supplies to large institutions, whether they are hospitals, charitable institutions, asylums, or workhouses, in regard to which there is grave abuse, and a system of pernicious and corrupt bribery prevails. The case of the Grosvenor Hotel is in your Lordships' recollection, and my attention has been called to cases of other hotels quite as bad, and in some respects worse than the case of the Grosvenor Hotel, because in that case the principal person who was said to have benefited by these evil practices was a man largely interested in the hotel. Lastly, there is the case of buyers from wholesale houses. Again and again it has been proved before the

court that this system prevails. Quite recently, in a case tried before me—Oetzmann's case—it was proved that the wholesale buyer was regularly paid by the wholesale manufacturer, and in this way, and in this way only, were orders secured. There was one thing which has struck me very much in this matter—the host of letters that have been sent to me and to others in this connection, including Sir Edward Fry, through which there runs a very piteous note. Men, confessing themselves to have been parties to this very practice, beg and desire help in the endeavour to be emancipated from it. They hate the practice, and want to get rid of it, but feel tied hand and foot. My Lords, I should be disappointed if I have not said enough to show your Lordships that this is a serious matter, which requires to be dealt with, and dealt with by legislation. I would remind your Lordships that what you are asked to do in the present case is to extend to transactions of the kind that I have been describing the principle which is already on the statute book in the case of public bodies. The Act of 1889, passed at the instance of Lord Randolph Churchill, makes bribes to employees or officials of public bodies a criminal offence, to be dealt with by severe punishment. I desire your Lordships to remove the limitation which restricts that law merely to the case of public bodies. We are dealing with the case of transactions where the commission is illicit, illegal, and could have been recovered by action from the man who received it, and in respect of which a civil action could also have been brought against the man who paid it. Those are the cases in which I seek to make the giving and receiving of commissions a criminal act. I beg your Lordships to bear in mind that anyone who might come under the operation of this Bill, if it becomes an Act, can relieve himself of all dread of punishment under it if only he is open and above board. For instance, if a servant says to his master, “I am getting a commission from the coachbuilder,” or from this or that tradesman, and the master consents to it, it is well and good, and so in the case of any other commission. The vice of this thing is its secrecy. I cannot better explain the objects of the Bill than I have done in the opening sentence of the Explanatory

Memorandum which accompanies the Bill, and which says:—

"The object of the Bill may be shortly stated as an effort to check, by making them criminal, a large number of inequitable and illegal secret payments, all of which are dishonest, and tend to shake confidence between man and man, and to discourage honest trade and enterprise."

How do I propose to carry out that object by this Bill? In the first place, clauses 3 and 8 declare certain specific transactions are corrupt unless the contrary is shown. I can, I think, explain what I mean by that if I read one clause, the third:—

"Every valuable consideration given or offered to an agent, by any person having business relations with the principal of such agent, shall be deemed to have been corruptly given or offered, unless it be proved—

(a) That the principal had given his consent thereto; or

"(b) That the valuable consideration was not calculated or intended, and had no tendency to corrupt the agent, by inducing him to do or to leave undone something contrary to his duty, or by creating any other undue influence on the mind of the agent."

What goes to the pith of this matter is that the receipt of these commissions creates a conflict between interest and duty; that is the moral basis for the legislation which I am asking your Lordships to adopt. The clause to which I have referred meets the great majority of those cases. There is, of course, the other class of cases to which I have referred generally, and as to which, no doubt, a greater amount of controversy may be expected—I mean the cases where the advice is given by A to B to deal with C, and C pays A without the knowledge of B, to whom the advice was given. Such cases are those of doctors, undertakers, solicitors, and brokers already mentioned. In some of these cases the practice may be so well-known that all parties may be taken to have known of and consented to the arrangement, and such a case would be entirely outside the statute. But the best class of professional men, whether in law or medicine, I believe, do not do such things as this Bill is designed to prevent. Another clause is aimed at the giving of false receipts, which is a favourite method for the payment of commissions. The receipt is given for the full amount, and appa-

rently no deduction at all is credited to the principal, the fact being that it is retained as a bribe by the agent. Then come the penal clauses, which are matters entirely to be dealt with by Parliament having regard to their views of the serious character of the offence. There is one provision which I ought to mention to your Lordships, which has been pointed out as essential by Sir Edward Fry, and by others interested in this question. There is enormous difficulty in getting evidence on these questions, and, therefore, somewhat in analogy to the provisions to be found in the Acts relating to bribery and corruption, there is a provision which would require a witness to give answers to questions, even though the answers might tend to incriminate him, but if he truly answers, then the judge who hears the case shall give him what is practically a certificate of indemnity. Another point is, ought this to be an Act which any person could put in force, or ought there to be in it a provision, as in the Act of 1889, requiring the fiat preliminary of the Attorney-General? My own impression is that the power should be given to the Attorney-General to exercise his power to enter a *nolle prosequi* if he thinks the case vexatious, or the like power could be given to a judge, if he takes the same view, in order to stay proceedings. That is all I have to say on the subject of the Bill itself, but there is the further question of public opinion. We recognise that we cannot go much in advance of public opinion, because, if we do, the Act would become to a large extent a dead letter. It is, on the other hand, a curious fact that, while public opinion acts upon legislation, legislation acts upon public opinion; and, again and again it has been found that a man who does a thing before an Act of Parliament condemns it, shrinks from doing it after such an Act is passed. That such is the case is proved by the experience of the operation of the Act of 1889, to which I have referred. There have been few prosecutions under that Act, though there have been some in cases of corruption by employees or agents or representatives of public bodies; but the Act, nevertheless, had wrought a very material and very important change for the good (though there is still great room for improve-

ment), and in the same way I believe that one important effect of this Bill, if it passes into law, will be that many men will be glad to have this Act as an answer and a means of defence to which they can resort in resisting the attempts of blackmailers to insist upon payments or bribes for orders. My Lords, I am further in a position to inform your Lordships that those best entitled to speak upon this matter have spoken strongly in support of the Bill which I am asking your Lordships to read a first time. I have taken the course of circulating copies of the Bill, as I now present it to your Lordships, to every considerable Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain and Ireland, and in only three cases in their replies have Chambers of Commerce, so to speak, belittled the Bill, saying that the matter was of no great importance, and that, after all, this bribery is of a very trifling character. These exceptional cases are the Chambers of Commerce of Swansea, Cardiff, and Belfast, and in the last-mentioned instance the resolution of the Chamber was published in a local newspaper. Oddly enough, among the mass of letters I have received on the subject came one from a private correspondent in Belfast, telling me not to mind what the Chamber of Commerce said, and assuring me that the Bill was very much needed in Belfast, as it was in many other places. As to the other two places mentioned, my information is that these evil practices are rife in the coal, iron, and shipping trades. I will conclude by telling your Lordships that in the strongest language the Associated Chambers of Commerce have expressed gratification at the attention of Parliament being drawn to this growing reprehensible practice, which is greatly injurious to business, and cannot be too strongly deprecated in the interest of commercial integrity. Amongst the Chambers of Commerce from which I have received communications in this sense are those of London, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Bristol, Newcastle, Sheffield, Batley, Wolverhampton, Luton, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin, and I have received similar communications from the Liverpool Provision Trade Association, and the West Yorkshire Federated Chamber of Trade. The Labour Association for promoting co-operative production, based on the co-partnership of the

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workers, representing one and one-half million co-operators, with a capital of £20,000,000, and an annual trade of £60,000,000, has replied, giving the terms of a resolution which will be submitted to the Congress to be held at Liverpool at Whitsuntide, and which is as follows:—

“That this Congress expresses its strong approval of the principle of the Bill promoted by the Lord Chief Justice with the object of bringing the practice of giving and taking secret and illicit commissions in trade and commerce under the criminal law, believing that such practices are seriously demoralising to individual character, injurious to industrial and commercial enterprise of every kind, and especially destructive and harmful to all forms of co-operation, and to municipal and public bodies generally.”

I feel strongly on this question, and have been led to detain the House at some length, with the hope that your Lordships will share the strong interest I feel. As a question of money, and as affecting trade, it is important, but that is not the only view presented to my mind. It is a practice that tarnishes the character of lawful commerce; it blunts the sense of honesty in the men engaged in it; it is injurious to the honest man, trying to conduct his business on high and honourable principles, and has a corrupting and degrading influence in ways that I need not formulate or define. I commend the Bill to your Lordships as an honest and a not hastily considered attempt to deal with what I conceive to be, and what, in the opinion of the Committee of the London Chamber of Commerce, is, a great and growing evil.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I suppose there are none of your Lordships who do not heartily concur in the observations of the Lord Chief Justice in censure of the practice referred to. The difficulty, of course, is in the machinery by which the evil shall be put down, and in respect to that we must reserve opinion. Until the Bill is in your Lordships' hands it is impossible to say *a priori* if the machinery goes too far or not. This is not the first time a proposal of this nature has been before Parliament, and I remember one of the objections against a former Bill was that so stringent were its provisions that it was just possible a man might be liable to two years' imprisonment for giving

6d. to a railway porter at a railway station, and this objection killed the Bill. But something can be done in the direction the learned and noble Lord desires without going to such extremes, and I only now interpose to say that I heartily sympathise with my noble and learned Friend in the desire to put an end to the practice, and do not believe he has in the slightest degree exaggerated the evils resulting, and, so far as I can, I will aid in the conduct of the Bill in Committee. Over-severity is an error to be avoided, and it must not be assumed that human nature can be changed, or legislation might do more harm than good, and it would be well to consider if it would not be wiser to require some official recognition of a prosecution than to leave it at large to Her Majesty's subjects. A late Lord Chief Justice gave an illustration in point in reference to prosecutions for taking drugs into a brewery, when he said a brewer, if he lived in his brewery, might be fined £500 for having cayenne pepper on his breakfast table. It is necessary to have the law stringent, but it is guarded by the condition that action can only be taken through the Attorney-General. Of course, there is the difficulty of allowing the use of this extreme power to persons who might make trifling or absurd complaints, and to put into the hands of the Attorney-General the power of saying whether such should be made subject to litigation, would get rid of a great deal of the evil. Blackmailers would be likely to proceed, by making use of this Bill, unless the power of action were controlled. With a strong public feeling on the subject, there is a tendency to be somewhat violent in the application of a remedy, and to ask Parliament to give powers to create offences to an extent that would cause a reaction and do harm instead of good. I earnestly hope that my noble and learned Friend will be successful in carrying out a useful Measure, for which he will deserve the thanks, not only of your Lordships, but of the whole country.

Question put.

Bill read a first time.

METROPOLITAN WATER COMPANIES BILL.

Read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 49.)

PARISH COUNCILS (TENURE OF OFFICE) BILL.

Read the first time; and to be printed. (No. 50.)

House adjourned at forty-five minutes past Five of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 20th April 1899.

MR. SPEAKER took the Chair at Three of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Provisional Order Bills (Standing Orders applicable thereto complied with).—

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.:—

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow.

PRIVATE BILLS.

(Petition for additional Provision) (Standing Orders not complied with).—

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for additional Pro-

vision in the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz:—

West Middlesex Water Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY BILL.

(Queen's Consent signified),—read the third time, and passed.

ILFORD GAS BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

MIDLAND RAILWAY BILL.

(Queen's Consent signified),—read the third time, and passed, with a New Title.

GLASGOW CORPORATION TELEPHONES BILL.

(By Order),—Second Reading deferred till Friday, 12th May.

LEEDS CORPORATION BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee to leave out Clause 30."—(*Mr. Strachey.*)

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

EAST LONDON WATER BILL AND EAST LONDON WATER (TEMPORARY SUPPLY) BILL

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the East London Water Bill and the East London Water (Temporary Supply) Bill that they have power, if they think fit, to consolidate the said two Bills or any part or parts thereof respectively into one Bill.—(*Dr. Farquharson.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to extend the municipal and police boundaries of the burgh of Dumbarton; for sanctioning a guarantee rate upon the owners and occupiers of lands and heritages in the burgh in further security of the interest on a portion of the debt of the Dumbarton Harbour Board; and for other purposes." [Dumbarton Burgh Bill] [H.L.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Magistrates and Town Council of Arbroath to borrow additional money in connection with their Gas undertaking; to amend and repeal certain provisions of the Arbroath Corporation Gas Act, 1871; and for other purposes." [Arbroath Corporation Gas Bill] [H.L.]

DUMBARTON BURGH BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

ARBROATH CORPORATION GAS BILL.

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

BOROUGH FUNDS ACT, 1872.

Petition from Pontypridd, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (CODE OF REGULATIONS FOR DAY SCHOOLS).

Petition from Birmingham, against proposed alterations to Articles 33, 37, and 42; to lie upon the Table.

GROCCERS' LICENCES (SCOTLAND) ABOLITION BILL.

Petition of the Congregational Union of Scotland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND RENT (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Petitions in favour,—From Horfield:—Ryde;—Ventnor;—and Sheffield; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour,—From Locharbriggs;—Congregational Union of Scotland;—Biggar;—Dundee;—Ardrossan;—Lockerbie;—Ratray;—and Scone; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SERVANTS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Petition from Rochester, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL.

Petition from Newington, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Pleasby;—Rotherham;—Hyde;—and Dukinfield; to lie upon the Table.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.

Petition from London, for extension to women; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Perth;—and Tranent; to lie upon the Table.

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS (ADDITIONAL POWERS).

Petitions from Hexham, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Bedford;—Wisbech;—and Ryde; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS TO CHILDREN.

Petition from Nelson, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.**MERCHANT SHIPPING (DESERTION OF SEAMEN.)**

Copy presented,—of Reports from certain Foreign and Colonial Ports respecting the Desertion of Seamen from British ships (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1887 (EVICTION NOTICES).

Copy presented,—of Return of Eviction Notices filed during the quarter ended 31st March 1899 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented,—of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Nos. 2225 to 2231 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House:—

THAMES CONSERVANCY.

General Report and Accounts of the Conservators for 1898 (by Act); to be printed. (No. 159.)

SCUNTHORPE URBAN DISTRICT GAS AND WATER BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (METROPOLITAN WATER COMPANIES BILL).

Mr. Anstruther and Mr. Pirie, the Tellers in the Aye Lobby in the Division of Tuesday the 18th instant, on the Motion relating to "Business of the House (Metropolitan Water Companies Bill)," came to the Table and stated that they had erroneously reported the number of the Ayes as 190, instead of 170, which was the proper number corresponding with the Division List.

Ordered, That the Clerk do correct the said error in the Journal of this House by stating the number of the Ayes to be 170 instead of 190.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP B)

Sir John Brunner reported from the Committee on Group B of Private Bills: That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Monday next, at Twelve of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP 6).

Sir Lewis McIver reported from the Committee on Group 6 of Railway and Tramway Bills: That, having no business ready for their consideration, the Committee had adjourned till Monday next, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

TAXES AND IMPOSTS.

Return ordered, "showing (1) the Rates of Duties, Taxes, or Imposts collected by Imperial Officers; (2) the Quantities or Amounts taxed; (3) the Gross Receipts derived from each Duty; and (4) the Net Receipts and Appropriations thereof in the year ending the 31st day of March 1899; and (1) the aggregate Gross Receipts derived from all such Duties, Taxes, or Imposts under the principal heads of Revenue; (2) the aggregate net receipts; (3) the Charges of Collection; and (4) the Produce, after

deducting these charges on each of the ten years ending the 31st day of March 1899:"

"And, Notes to show any changes in the Taxes, Duties, and Imposts, consequent upon the acceptance of the Budget Proposals of 1899 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 334, of Session 1898)."—(*Mr. Goddard.*)

QUESTIONS.**CONVERSION OF THE TURKISH 1855 (CRIMEAN) LOAN.**

MR. PIERPOINT (Kennington): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether a convention for a conversion of the residue of the Turkish 1855 (Crimean) Loan was signed by the Prime Minister and the Turkish Ambassador in August last; whether he will lay a copy of it upon the Table; whether the Sultan of Turkey has declined to ratify the convention; and whether any negotiations in the matter are now taking place?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. ST. JOHN BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): As the negotiations on this subject are incomplete, I am unable at present to make any statement.

VACCINATION EXEMPTION CERTIFICATES.

MR. BROADHURST (Leicester): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the conviction at the Melbourn (Cambridgeshire) Petty Sessions, on the prosecution of the vaccination officer of the Royston Union, under section 29 of the Vaccination Act, 1867, of William Bertram Parrish, the defendant having obtained a certificate of exemption under section 2 of the Vaccination Act, 1898, but which he had failed to deliver to the vaccination officer within seven days of its being granted; and whether he is advised that

the mere failure to deliver such certificate to the vaccination officer within the prescribed period renders it null and void; and, if not, whether he will issue instructions to vaccination officers that, where an exemption certificate has been granted and delivered, although such delivery has not been made within the prescribed period, no proceedings should be instituted?

THE UNDER SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): My right honourable Friend has made inquiry as to the case referred to in the Question, and he finds that the certificate of conscientious objection was not delivered to the vaccination officer until 11 days after it had been granted. He is advised that section 2 of the Vaccination Act, 1898, only exempts the parent from liability to penalties under the Vaccination Acts if he delivers the certificate to the vaccination officer within seven days after it has been granted. My right honourable Friend could not undertake to issue any general instructions to the vaccination officers not to take proceedings in cases in which certificates have been delivered after the time prescribed by the Statute.

POST OFFICE ORGANISATIONS.

Mr. STEADMAN (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether, considering that it is the declared policy of the Post Office not to discourage organisations among its officials at the Post Office, he will permit the various associations to exhibit their rules on the notice boards in the coat or retiring rooms of the staff to which they are relative; whether he is aware that at the present time a notice of a permanent nature is being exhibited on one of the coat room notice boards at Glasgow; and whether he will state why the rule recently quoted is not being adhered to?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): My right honourable Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury has asked

me to answer for him. No, Sir. The rules of associations are of a permanent nature, and there can be no difficulty in distributing them to the members. They are not, therefore, regarded as suitable for exhibition on the notice boards. The notice at Glasgow, mentioned by the honourable Member, gives particulars of a library in the Post Office which is open to the staff. It is quite unnecessary, as it relates to permanent advantages which are well known to all concerned, and instructions have been given that it is to be removed.

FATALITY IN THE THAMES—THE DROWNING OF R. H. NEVILLE.

Mr. STEADMAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received a communication from the Southwark coroner respecting the death of Richard Henry Neville, who was drowned in the Thames on 15th March 1899 through the swamping of a boat by the s.s. "Nordcap"; and whether, considering that the jury that inquired into the cause of death severely censured the ship's company for gross negligence in not attempting to save life, and that the "Nordcap" belongs to foreign owners, the Government will assist the passage of a Bill to make the owners of foreign vessels liable for damages for personal injuries or loss of life caused by their own or their servants' negligence, in the same manner that British shipowners are now liable?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: No, Sir, I have not received any communication from the Southwark coroner with regard to the case to which the honourable Member refers. If such a communication should reach me, it will receive careful consideration. Meanwhile, I am in correspondence with the Foreign Office with the view of ascertaining the state of the law which obtains on the subject in the principal maritime countries.

WAR OFFICE RE-ORGANISATION.

GENERAL RUSSELL (Cheltenham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War, if he will state the names of the members of the Departmental Committee which, as mentioned in the statement of the Secretary of State for War, is now considering the reorganisation of the War Office, in accordance with the recommendations of Mr. Brodrick's Committee, and when it is probable that their report will be completed; and, whether it will be laid on the Table of the House?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. J. POWELL WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): The Committee consists of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, the Financial Secretary, the Assistant Under Secretary of State, and the Accountant-General. Until the Report has been submitted, no assurance can be given as to its presentation. It is not, however, the practice to present Reports of this kind. In consequence of the illness of the Parliamentary Under Secretary the meetings of the Committee have for the present been suspended, but they will be resumed as soon as possible.

BENIN EXPEDITION.

MR. DAVITT (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, by whose orders the Benin Punitive Expedition is being organised and directed, the War Office or the Foreign Office; whether, considering that punitive measures, including the burning of towns and villages and the killing of many people, have already been carried out in retaliation for the killing of Mr. Phillips and his party, there is any necessity to continue action of that character; and, if he can state the number of natives who have been killed and the number of villages that have been burned by British troops since the first march on Benin took place?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): As this is a matter which affects the Colonial Office, I may be allowed to answer. The proposed expedition is not in retaliation for the mas-

sacre of Mr. Phillips and his party, but consists of a detachment of the Niger Coast Protectorate Force, which is being sent from Benin City by Her Majesty's Commissioner, with the sanction of the Colonial Office, to capture two chiefs—one of whom was in command of the forces which carried out the massacre—who have established themselves about 70 miles from the city and are collecting around them all the criminals and unruly persons from a large area, and disturbing the peace of the British Protectorate. I have no information which would enable me to answer the last paragraph.

BLOOD MONEY FOR WOUNDED BRITISH OFFICERS.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether it has yet been determined to grant blood money to British officers serving with the Egyptian army in the Soudan, in respect of wounds involving loss of limb or equivalent injury, which have now in some cases been unrecognised for more than a year; and, whether he is aware that the necessary treatment has entailed heavy pecuniary expenditure on some of the sufferers?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: The matter is still under consideration.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY: Can the honourable Gentleman answer the second part of the Question? I am sure it deserves consideration.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: I will make inquiry as to that.

SCOTTISH ICE CREAM SHOPS AND SHEBEENING.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): On behalf of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Stirling Burghs I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the use which, in some towns in Scotland, is being made of ice cream shops for the consumption of intoxicating liquor on Sun-

days; and, whether steps can be taken to prevent such a practical evasion of the law?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): I have seen suggestions to the effect indicated in the right honourable Gentleman's Question in the newspapers; but there have been no specific informations or complaints submitted through the Procurator-Fiscals to the Crown Office, or generally to me, or to the Secretary for Scotland. The effect of the Act of 1897 dealing with the sale of sweets has been greatly to strengthen the hands of the police; and any case of the nature suggested in the Question could and would be treated as one of ordinary shebeening.

SHOP CLUBS.

MR. GALLOWAY (Manchester, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government intend to introduce a Bill this Session dealing with the question of the shop clubs upon the lines of the Report of the Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into the subject; and, if not, whether the Government will afford an opportunity for the passing of the Truck Acts Amendment Bill, provided that Bill is so amended as to embody all the recommendations of the Departmental Committee?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir M. WHITE RIDLEY, Lances., Blackpool): I am afraid that there does not appear to be any prospect of there being time for the introduction of such a Measure. If my honourable Friend or any private Member should introduce a Bill on the lines of the recommendations of the Committee, the Government would be prepared to consider it favourably, but I am not in a position to promise any facilities.

INEBRIATES' REFORMATORIES.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inebriate reformatories have been certified under the Inebriates Act, 1898, and how many of these have been established by county councils and borough

councils respectively; whether any inebriate reformatory has yet been certified for men; whether several cases have occurred in which men, who had been ordered by courts to be detained under the Act, had to be discharged because there was no institution to receive them; and, if so, what steps does he propose to take in order to prevent similar miscarriages in future; and whether any State inebriate reformatory has yet been established; and, if not, what temporary arrangements (if any) have been made for the reception of persons committed under section 1 of the Act?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: Three inebriate reformatories have been certified. No local authority has yet established a reformatory; but several are, to my knowledge, actively considering the question, which, I need scarcely point out, is not one that can be settled in a day. There is as yet no certified reformatory for men; but, though I am officially aware of one case such as the honourable Member mentions in the third paragraph of his Question, and though there are probably a few others, I do not think I am called upon to take any steps. I am confident that magistrates will not, as a rule, commit persons under the Act until they know that provision exists for their reception into a reformatory. No State inebriate reformatory has been established; all the institutions already certified are, with one small exception, willing to receive persons committed under section 1 of the Act.

NEWGATE PRISON.

MR. BARNES (Kent, Faversham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is proposed to erect the new Central Criminal Court upon the old site in Newgate Street, including that of Her Majesty's Prison of Newgate; and whether, before a final decision is arrived at, Her Majesty's Government will afford the House an opportunity to discuss the suitability of that site as compared with others shortly to become vacant under the Strand improvement scheme?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT : The reconstruction of the Central Criminal Court buildings is a matter for the City of London authorities. Her Majesty's Government have agreed to assist them by surrendering the site of Her Majesty's Prison, Newgate, but are not otherwise concerned in the matter.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancs., Chorley): Does that mean that the old prison at Newgate is to be pulled down?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT : Yes, Sir.

POLITICAL MEETINGS IN NATIONAL SCHOOLROOMS.

MR. LAMBERT (Devon, South Molton): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that a perfectly regular application to hold a political meeting in the national schoolroom at Alwington, Devon, has lately been refused to the Liberal candidate for the Barnstaple Division; whether he will state to the House the total income of the school, specifying the amount received from the public funds and from voluntary subscriptions; whether he is aware that the Alwington School received £21 5s., or nearly 10s. per scholar, in 1897-8 under the Voluntary Schools Act, 1897; and if he will withdraw the aid grant under that Act in the event of the use of the school being denied for a legitimate public purpose?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (Sir J. GORST, Cambridge University): Parliamentary candidates have no right to claim the use of elementary schools for political meetings. The school receives £74 8s. 6d. from public funds, £23 14s. 9d. from voluntary subscriptions, and 16s. from sale of needlework—a total of £98 19s. 3d. The statement in the third paragraph is substantially correct. There is no ground for withdrawal of the aid grant.

POULTRY BREEDING IN SCOTLAND.
MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is now in a position to state what steps have been taken by the Congested Districts Board (Scotland) to encourage and improve the breed of poultry in the congested areas?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: The Congested Districts Board have arranged for the carrying out of some experiments during the present season.

INVERNESS-SHIRE REGISTERS.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he will state the number of ratepayers in Inverness-shire who, while being entitled to vote at Parliamentary and County Council Elections, have no vote at School Board Elections?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: I am not in possession of information which would enable me to answer the Question. The objection to obtaining a general Return, which I have already intimated to the honourable Member, applies equally to a Return for a particular county.

MR. WEIR: Will the right honourable Gentleman allow an inspection of the roll of voters?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: I think that under the Statute it can be seen free. At any rate it can for a small payment.

FORT GEORGE WATER SUPPLY.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War, having regard to the fact that the District Committee of the Inverness-shire County Council are arranging to supply the village of Campbellton, a short distance from Fort George, with water from the Culloden Hills, will he consider the expediency of co-operating with the Committee, so that Fort George may be provided with water from a source more wholesome and enduring than that likely

to be derived from the well which it is at present proposed to sink on a common half a mile from the Fort?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS : The District Committee required £500 a year for the delivery of water at a mile and a half from the Fort. As it was considered that a sufficient quantity of good water could be obtained at a much smaller cost from wells on War Department property, the proposal of the District Committee was declined.

ROSS-SHIRE MILITIA.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War, having regard to the fact that when in 1867 the arms and clothing of the 3rd Battalion of Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Militia) were transferred from Dingwall to Fort George with the concurrence of the county authority, that authority was not a representative body, will he, in view of the unanimous desire of the Dingwall Town Council that the entire staff and regiment may be quartered in the county town, reconsider his decision on the subject, and provide the necessary additional accommodation?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: There is no reason for altering the decision expressed in my reply to the honourable Member's Question of the 20th March.

KOWLOON.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is aware that there is a strong feeling amongst those who have been long acquainted with the Colony of Hong Kong, and are interested in its progress, that the non-inclusion of the city of Kowloon in the recent lease of adjacent territory from China will prove a source of great unrest to the Colony of Hong Kong, a hotbed of crime and gambling, and a most insanitary area in the midst of the Colony; and if steps could be taken to acquire the city of Kowloon from the Chinese Government?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: As I stated on Tuesday, the whole question connected with the extension of the territory of Hong Kong will require careful reconsideration in the light of recent events. As stress is laid upon the condition in the Convention relating to the City of Kowloon, it may remove misconception if I state that it refers only to the walled town, which is smaller than Eaton Square, and contained in October last a population of 744, of whom 366 were soldiers, who will have to be removed in any case.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER: Will this small Alsatia be swept away?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: I do not think it is an Alsatia. I think the Alsatia to which the honourable Member refers, if it exist at all, is in the suburbs of the city, and not within the walled town, which is the only part reserved to Chinese administration.

TELEGRAPHIC REQUIREMENTS OF WHITEGATE (COUNTY CLARE).

MR. McDERMOTT (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether a memorial was forwarded to him last year, signed by the clergymen of all denominations, magistrates, poor law guardians, landowners, and traders of the district, praying for the establishment of a telegraph office at Whitegate, county Clare; whether a connection could be established with Mountshannon post office, which is about midway between Scariff and Whitegate; whether he is aware that three letter-carriers are employed in the Whitegate district; and whether the prayer of the memorial will now be acceded to?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (for Mr. HANBURY): The memorial was received in 1897, and was answered by the Postmaster-General, to the effect that he would be prepared to establish a telegraph office at Whitegate under guarantee. He will again send particulars to the memorialists. The circumstances do not appear to justify the establishment of a telegraph

office at Mountshannon as well as at Whitegate. There is no full-time letter carrier in the Whitegate district, but three persons are employed in the delivery of letters for short periods in the day.

**JOHNSTOWN (COUNTY KILKENNY)
DISPENSARY DISTRICT.**

MR. McDERMOTT: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a memorial with reference to the dissolution of the Johnstown, county Kilkenny, dispensary district; whether he is aware that the necessity for dispensary relief is so great that a medical club has had to be established there, and is supported by voluntary subscriptions; and whether, in view of this evidence of public feeling and public necessity, he will advise the Local Government Board to accede to the prayer of the memorial?

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE
LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND**
(**MR. GERALD W. BALFOUR**, Leeds, Central): The memorial referred to has been received and duly considered, and a reply has been sent to the memorialists, the terms of which have, no doubt, been communicated to the honourable Member. The memorial contained a statement as to the establishment of a medical club at Johnstown. It is not believed that the rearrangement of the medical officers' districts will inflict any serious hardship on the sick poor; on the contrary, the Local Government Board anticipate that the new arrangements will conduce to a better attendance on the majority of the sick poor throughout these districts. As at present advised, I see no reason to act on the suggestion in the last paragraph of the Question. I have already pointed out there is nothing to prevent the Board reconstituting the dispensary districts in any union at a future time, in the event of experience showing that the alterations which have been decided upon have proved productive of inconvenience to the sick poor.

PARISH RECORDS.

MR. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthen, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether parish councils are entitled to have the custody of the inclosure maps and awards relating to the parish, and which have hitherto been in the custody of the vicar?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (**MR. W. H. LONG**, Liverpool, West Derby): I think that under section 17 (8) of the Local Government Act, 1894, a parish council have power to give directions as to the custody in which inclosure awards confirmed under the Inclosure Acts and any other awards directed to be kept with the public books, writings, and other papers of the parish are to be deposited. If the persons having the present custody of the award, with the relative map, refuse to give effect to such directions there would apparently be a difference as to custody, which under the enactment referred to falls to be determined by the county council.

INDIAN PETROLEUM TRADE.

SIR E. HILL (Bristol, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether an Act has been recently passed by the Indian Government for the consolidation and amendment of the petroleum regulations in that country; whether he can state what is the legal flash point of petroleum in India; whether such flash point has been found to be satisfactory; and whether, in recent legislation, any proposals were made to alter it?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (**LORD GEORGE HAMILTON**, Middlesex, Ealing): The Act passed in February last was mainly a Consolidation Bill, but with important Amendments. The legal flash point is 76 deg. close test, but a cargo of petroleum or petroleum held by dealers is allowed, if the samples selected from such petroleum have their flashing points on an average at or above 73 deg., and if no one of these samples has its flashing point below 70 deg. A dispatch from the Government of India,

dated Simla, 24th April 1895, states that, after a full inquiry, the legal flash point was found to be satisfactory. The dispatch concludes as follows—

"The reports which we have now received show that there have been a few lamp accidents, but their occurrence does not appear to us to justify the raising of the present legal minimum flashing point, and we see no reason for modifying the opinion previously formed by us in regard to the matter."

In the discussion on the Bill the question of raising the flash point was not suggested.

THE NEW WINE DUTIES.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer how much of the £420,000 estimated increase from wine duties is estimated to arise from the increase of duty on still wines in wood from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per gallon; and how much from the increase of duty on still wines in bottles from 1s. to 3s. a gallon?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): Of the £420,000 of estimated increase from the new wine duties, the sum of £200,000 is estimated to arise from the increase of duty on still wines in wood from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per gallon, and £48,000 from the increase of duty on still wine in bottle from 1s. to 3s. per gallon. My right honourable Friend will understand that this last figure is based on the assumption that the cheaper wines now imported in bottle will in future be imported in cask.

MR. COURTNEY: Can my right honourable Friend tell us what are the relative quantities now imported—wine in wood, and wine, other than sparkling, in bottle?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: If my right honourable Friend will put the Question on the Paper I will endeavour to answer it. I cannot do so without notice.

ATBARA BRIDGE CONTRACT.

SIR A. HICKMAN (Wolverhampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the circumstances under which the contract for the Atbara Bridge has been given to an American firm; if he will lay upon the Table copies of the specification upon which the English firms quoted and the final specification accepted by the American firm; if he will state whether English contractors were asked to quote for a bridge of their own design, and what is the difference in weight between the bridge quoted for by the English firms and that agreed to be supplied by the American contractor; whether the Government have a sufficient guarantee from the American contractor that the bridge when erected will be of sufficient strength; whether the Government will have to pay the freight of the American bridge from New York to Liverpool and the expense of transshipment there, and what these will amount to; and whether he is aware that the invariable custom of English engineers, whether for British, Indian, or Egyptian bridges, is to give detailed specifications; and that therefore it is impossible for British bridge makers to keep to fixed standards and have drawings and patterns at hand, as suggested in Lord Cromer's Report?

MR. BRODRICK: We have no information on the subject beyond that contained in Lord Cromer's Report (Egypt, No. 399, pages 2 and 3). I will inquire from Lord Cromer whether the information which my honourable Friend desires can be given.

THE COLONIES AND THE NEW WINE DUTIES.

MR. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in framing the Finance Bill, he will favourably consider the desirability of limiting the application of the increases of duty foreshadowed in his Budget proposals to foreign as distinguished from Colonial imports, thereby re-assuring those British Colonies that have been alarmed by the

possibility of their trade with the Mother Country being seriously disorganised and very prejudicially affected?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER: I understand that representations on this subject will be made to me by the Agents-General for the wine-growing Colonies, and also by a deputation, and of course it will be my duty to consider any arguments or facts they may bring before me. But at present I do not see on what ground the course suggested by the honourable Member could be defended.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): Can the right honourable Gentleman say how much he anticipates from the duties on Colonial wines?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER: I stated the other night that the Colonial wine trade was very small in comparison with the rest of the wine trade.

MR. J. LOWTHER: What loss of revenue would be involved by excluding Colonial wines from the new duty?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER: I cannot say, without notice.

MR. GALLOWAY: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the expressed adverse feeling in the Colonies, at a time when they are desirous of coming to closer relations with the Mother Country, the Government will reconsider their proposal to increase the duties upon wines imported from the Colonies?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester E.): I understand that my right honourable Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has already answered a similar Question to this, and I have nothing to add to his reply.

SAMOA.

MR. DAVITT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether there was an acting consul and a naval officer of the Germanic Empire at Apia when a British officer arrested

a German subject and submitted him to the indignity of imprisonment on one of Her Majesty's ships; whether this arrest was made on *ex parte* grounds without any form of investigation or trial, and was the German subject subsequently handed over to the representative of the German Government without indictment or trial; from what source did the British officer derive his right to treat a subject of a friendly Power in this arbitrary manner; whether he has been or will be called to account for his conduct; and whether any explanation of this proceeding has been given by Her Majesty's Government to the Government of Germany?

MR. BRODRICK: German naval and consular officers were no doubt in Samoa when the German subject was arrested. According to the telegraphic Reports the arrest was made on sworn testimony that the German was seen directing the movements of the natives who were attacking British subjects and property. This is the whole of the information which has reached Her Majesty's Government, and fuller particulars must be awaited before they can form any judgment on the matter. The German Government have been informed that the German subject has been handed over to the commander of the German ship of war on an assurance that he would be detained there.

PURCHASE OF SMALL HOUSES BILL.

MR. DAVITT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, as the 13th clause of the Purchase of Small Houses Bill, which makes the Measure applicable to Ireland, consists entirely of references to clauses and provisions of existing enactments, covering no less than 10 Acts of Parliament, he will recommend the printing of the provisions and clauses thus indicated, in the form of an appendix, before the Bill is submitted to the Grand Committee, and will add the appendix to the Act when it becomes law?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: I will consider between this and the sitting of the Grand Committee

whether the suggestion of the honourable Member can be in whole or part adopted, but the Acts referred to are of so simple a character that I do not think that any difficulty will be found in following them.

HIGHLAND CROFTING COUNTIES ACREAGE.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if the Secretary for Scotland will grant a Return showing the acreage of each parish in each of the six Highland crofting counties, the population of each parish for the years 1851-2, 1861-2, 1871-2, 1881-2, 1891-2, the poor rate, the cost of the maintenance of the poor, and the acreage under cultivation in each parish in each of the years indicated?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: The information desired by the honourable Member under the first head of his Question will be found by him in Slater's Directory; under the second head in the Census Returns; and under the third and fourth heads in the Annual Reports of the Board of Supervision and Local Government Board. All these books he will find in the library. I have no source of information, nor do I believe that any exists, for the statistics desired under the fifth head. Under the circumstances, the Secretary for Scotland does not see his way to granting the Return asked for.

MILITARY WORKS DEPARTMENT IN INDIA.

MR. HUDSON (Herts, Hitchin): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, having in view the fact that it is now more than 12 years since the Government of India declared and constituted the Military Works Department to be a Military Department, and employment in it military employment under the Commander-in-Chief, and, further, that the new rules, to formulate which General Maitland's Committee assembled in the summer of 1896, have been three times quashed, and are now for the fourth time postponed, after it

had been promised that they should come into operation on the 1st April 1899, he can give any definite information as to when the rules will really come into force?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: I am not aware of any promise having been made that new rules for the Military Works Department would come into operation on the 1st April 1899. The subject is now under my consideration, and I hope that orders will shortly be issued, but I am unable as yet to fix a date from which they will have effect.

OFFICERS' QUARTERS AT ALDERSHOT.

MR. HUDSON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that in the new blocks built for officers at Aldershot, such as the Corunna block, there are no bath rooms; and whether he proposes to remedy this deficiency?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: It is a fact that there are no permanent baths in the officers' mess blocks at Aldershot. The question of providing baths for officers in barracks hereafter to be built is being considered.

THEATRICAL CENSORSHIP

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the depraving character of some plays now acted in London theatres, the Government will consider the advisability of placing the licensing of theatres under the control of the London County Council, as is the case with music halls?

MR. PIERPOINT: I should like to ask whether the honourable Member who puts the Question has given my right honourable Friend the names of the plays to which he refers, and an assurance that he speaks from his own personal knowledge?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: I may remind the honourable Member that a Select Committee of this House, which

inquired into the licensing and regulation of theatres and places of public recreation in 1892, recommended that the authority of the Lord Chamberlain in this matter should remain in his hands and should not be transferred to the London County Council. I see no reason for departing from this recommendation.

VACANT BRITISH VICE-CONSULATES IN THE EAST.

Mr. F. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs why the British Vice-Consulates at Bitlis and at Diarbekir have been allowed to remain vacant; and whether the Secretary of State is able to give an assurance that steps will be taken to fill these posts without delay?

Mr. BRODRICK: The Vice-Consulates at Bitlis and Diarbekir have been left temporarily vacant at a time of year when it was not anticipated that any inconvenience would arise, the dragomans remaining in charge. Mr. Vice-Consul Jenes has recently been appointed to the Diarbekir Vice-Consulate, and whenever the necessary arrangements can be made the Bitlis post will be filled up.

MARGARINE TRADE IN DUBLIN.

Mr. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is any daily or weekly account kept of the quantity of margarine delivered in Dublin; are the names of the consignees recorded; and whether it is entered in the Dublin Custom House list as margarine, or under some other name?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I have no official cognisance of the matters referred to in the Question, but I am in communication on the subject with the Chairman of Customs, and if the Question be repeated to-morrow, I hope to be able to reply to it.

THE BROTHERS NATU.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will now consider the advisability of removing the restrictions

on the brothers Natu, who have now been detained without trial for about a year and ten months; and, if not, whether he will state on what grounds, connected with the public tranquillity, they are still prevented returning to their homes?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: I have seen no reason for altering the decision which I announced on the 21st of April, 1898. I then stated that I had no intention of interfering with the discretion of the Government of Bombay as to the time when in the interests of public tranquillity and order the present restrictions imposed upon the movement of the natives could be removed. In the opinion of the Bombay Government, that time has not yet arrived, and I can give no pledge with regard to the future.

Mr. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): Are these men ever to be brought to trial?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: They are detained under the Regulations of 1817, and there is no necessity to bring them to trial.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN: Seeing the complete state of public tranquillity, and the long time these men have been detained, will the noble Lord cause a special report to be made?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: I do not know where the honourable Member gets his information as to the complete state of tranquillity, but it is not the information that reaches me. I see no reason to interfere.

SUGAR FACTORIES IN INDIA.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India can he state for the last five years the number of factories in India producing refined sugar according to European methods, and the amount produced; and whether an estimate can be formed of the quantity of refined sugar produced by Native methods?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: (1) There are, I believe, about

ll sugar factories in British India producing refined sugar according to European methods. But complete statistics of the output of these factories are not available; nor can any trustworthy estimate be formed of the amount of sugar produced by Native methods.

RETURN AS TO INDIAN SUGAR.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will agree to the Motion for a Return as to Indian Sugar, which stands on the Paper this day?

[The following was the Motion referred to—

East India (Sugar Importation and Cultivation).—Address for Return showing for each of the years 1882-3 to 1898-9, inclusive: (1) The quantity and the value of imports of sugar from India from Germany, Austria, and Mauritius; (2) the acreage of sugar cane cultivation in the several Provinces of India; (3) the quantity of refined Indian sugar exported from Bengal and the North West Provinces to other Provinces in India and to the Native States; (4) the quantity of Indian Sugar, refined and unrefined, exported to Ceylon, to the United Kingdom, and to other countries; and (5) the number of persons engaged in the sugar industry in India, distinguishing (a) those engaged in refining, and (b) those engaged in producing unrefined sugar.]

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: I shall be able to furnish the statistics asked under headings 1 to 4 with some approach to completeness, but I cannot furnish the statistics asked under heading 5 of the Return for which the honourable Member desires to move.

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, CARDIFF.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the honourable Member for Salford as representing the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, whether the provisions of the Bill now before Parliament to authorise the sale of All Saints' Church, Cardiff, and to apply the proceeds to building an English Church in another part of the parish, have been approved by the Ecclesiastical Commis-

sioners; whether he is aware that All Saints' was erected at the expense of the late Marchioness of Bute for the use of the Welsh speaking inhabitants of Cardiff; that the site was subsequently conveyed by the trustees of the will of the late Marchioness to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; and that the churchwardens and officers of the new Welsh church, dedicated to Dewi Sant, and situate in the parish of All Saints, are strongly opposed to the diversion of the endowment from the original intention of the donor, and desire that the proceeds of any sale of All Saints' Church shall be applied to completing the present Welsh Church building, and liquidating the debt thereon; and whether the Commissioners will reconsider the matter?

THE PARLIAMENTARY ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONER (Mr. LEES KNOWLES, Salford, W.): In answer to the first part of the Question, sufficient details of the scheme embodied in the Bill have never been submitted to the Commissioners to enable them to express a definite opinion upon the scheme, and they have not approved the provisions of the Bill. All Saints' Church, Cardiff, and its site were conveyed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners under the provisions of the Church Building Acts by deed dated 3rd October, 1866, by trustees, it is believed, of the Bute Estate, and, although it was stated that the Church was erected at the expense of the late Marchioness of Bute, yet, the trustees under such deed received a consideration of £2,998 15s. 0d. The Commissioners were not aware when they took such conveyance that the Church was intended for the use of the Welsh-speaking inhabitants of Cardiff, and the Church of All Saints' became, and now is, the Parish Church of the Ecclesiastical district of All Saints', Cardiff. With regard to the last paragraph of the Question, it is not proposed by the Bill that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners should have conferred upon them any duties or obligations outside the existing Statutes, and there is, therefore, no necessity for making them consenting parties.

MR. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tonbridge): Arising out of my honourable Friend's answer, I should like to ask whether, if the Commissioners have

not approved of the Bill, it is to be understood that they have expressed any disapproval of it.

MR. LEES KNOWLES: I am not aware that the Commissioners have expressed any disapproval of the Bill.

CHITRAL RELIEFS.

COLONEL MILWARD (Stratford-upon-Avon): I beg to ask the Secretary for India, whether he is able to give the House any information with relation to the countermanding of the annual reliefs to Chitral.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: The Government of India are considering certain proposals which, by means of changes of position and of defensive works, would enable them to reduce the existing garrison at Chitral. Pending a decision they have postponed temporarily the usual reliefs.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

LORD BALCARRES: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the plans of the new Museums at South Kensington can be shown in the Tea Room?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): I presume that my noble Friend refers to the plans of the extension of the Art Museum—the plans for Science Buildings being already in the Tea Room. As I explained in my Reply to a Question at the beginning of the Session, these plans are practically the same as those formerly approved by the House, and it was therefore unnecessary to delay the work by again depositing them here; although I should be glad, as I said, to show them to any honourable Member who might desire to see them.

LORD BALCARRES: Will the Science Museum be included in the buildings marked "Royal College of Science" on the map in the Tea Room?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS: Yes, Sir.

THE EDUCATION CODE.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education, if the code subjects of the Education Department are so framed that precautions are taken to secure that the syllabuses for the subjects of science or art in the code are more elementary than, and do not overlap, the syllabuses of the "Science and Art Directory"?

SIR J. GORST: Care is taken so to frame the schemes of instruction in both day and evening schools codes that they may be more elementary than those in the directory of the Science and Art Department, and that the overlapping may be reduced to a minimum.

CAPE TO CAIRO RAILWAY.

MR. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether, before any Government guarantee is given of any portion of the railway proposed by Mr. Cecil Rhodes to connect the Cape with Cairo, or of any other proposed new railway in Africa, the Government will take the opinion of this House on such guarantee?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: No, Sir. Such a course would not be in accordance with constitutional practice. Any agreement into which the Government might enter in a matter of this kind must be subject to confirmation by Parliament, and would have to be submitted to Parliament for that purpose.

NEW DUTY ON FOREIGN AND COLONIAL SECURITIES.

MR. RENSHAW (Renfrew, W.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the stamp duties of a quarter per cent. on Foreign and Colonial securities will apply to Indian securities; and, if so, whether, they will be imposed on Rupee Paper?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I conceive that the Resolution passed by the Committee would include Indian securities. But the question of Rupee Paper may present some difficulty. I shall be glad if the honourable Member will communicate with me on the subject.

CRETE.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government will take the lead in proposing to the other Powers who are jointly responsible with England for the condition of Crete, the guarantee of a sum sufficient to enable the starving Mussulmans of Crete to be restored to their lands and houses?

MR. BRODRICK: As I stated on Tuesday, a proposal initiated by the High Commissioner of Crete for the purpose mentioned is already under the consideration of the Powers, and Her Majesty's Government have indicated their willingness to contribute, provided other Governments will assist equally.

ARREST OF BRITISH TRAWLERS BY DANISH GUNBOATS.

MR. DOUGHTY (Great Grimsby): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the steam trawler "Corvos," of Grimsby, was arrested by a Danish gunboat on the 10th instant while navigating through a fjord at the Faroe Islands; that the vessel was captured and taken to Shorshavn; that the captain was charged with fishing within territorial waters, which he strenuously denied, and was convicted on mere hearsay evidence, the commander of the boat admitting that he had not seen him, but had been informed by some shore men who were in a small boat; that the fishing captain was denied any right of appeal, and asserts that the judge, in charging him, advised him to plead guilty, and, when he refused, said he should adjourn the case until the next morning if the offence was not admitted, and if he did so the fine would

be much heavier, and then if the fine was not paid the ship would be sold; that, on pleading guilty, he was fined £80, his vessel ransacked, his gear confiscated, and his valuable cargo destroyed; that the loss to his owners is estimated at £500; whether he is aware that during the last three months upwards of 50 British trawlers have been arrested in these waters, and that Englishmen are being treated by the Danes as pirates, and no protection or right of appeal is given to them; and whether Her Majesty's Government intend to allow this humiliating condition of affairs to continue; and, if not, what course they propose to adopt to ensure protection to our fishermen, and security to British property?

MR. DOUGHTY: I beg at the same time to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that, on Monday, 27th March, the steam trawler "Iolanthe," of Hull, was fishing in company with two other vessels off the south coast of Iceland when it was arrested by a Danish gunboat, and taken to Reykjavick, and charged with fishing within territorial waters; that he was tried on board the gunboat, the commander stating that when he saw him he was 2½ miles from the nearest point of the land; that the captain of the trawler denied the charge, and stated that he took the distance, and was a long way outside the limit, and his opinion is confirmed by the other vessels that were fishing with him; also that he further asserts that if an English gunboat had been there he could have proved his case conclusively to our commander; that, notwithstanding the doubtful nature of the evidence, he was fined £56, his gear confiscated, and his large cargo of fish destroyed; that he was required to sign a paper admitting his guilt, or the vessel would be detained until the money was sent from England; that the loss to the owners is £800; and whether Her Majesty's Government will represent this case to the Danish authorities, and institute a searching investigation?

MR. BRODRICK: I will answer the two Questions together. No reports respecting the seizure of the "Corvos" or "Iolanthe" have yet reached Her

Majesty's Government. A large number of British trawlers have recently been arrested by the Danish authorities in Faroese waters, and each case as it is reported will receive the most careful consideration of Her Majesty's Government. In the meantime negotiations are proceeding with the Danish Government with the view to some satisfactory adjustment of the circumstances which led to these arrests.

MR. DOUGHTY: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the steam trawler "Caspian," of Grimsby, was arrested in March last off the Faroe Islands, when outside territorial waters, and proceeding on her homeward voyage; that the captain was ordered on board the gunboat and, by order of the commander, chained to the deck to await his trial; that, owing to the second hand determining to proceed to port with the vessel and its valuable and perishable cargo, Skipper Johnson was sentenced to 30 days' imprisonment, and is being kept on a bread and water diet; that he was seen on the 10th of April last by an Englishman, who reports that he is a perfect wreck and only just able to stand; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will institute a full and searching inquiry into the details of this case and, if he has been illegally imprisoned, will demand compensation from the Danish Government for the suffering and loss he has sustained?

MR. BRODRICK: The information which has reached us in this case tends to show that the master of the steam trawler "Caspian," whether within territorial waters or not, was seriously to blame. It transpired at the inquiry on his own statement that when signalled to stop by the gunboat he sailed on full speed; that he twice went before the beam of the gunboat, causing immediate danger of a collision, in order to make the captain of the gunboat slacken speed from fear of a collision, and, after being arrested and taken on board the gunboat he hailed the "Caspian" and ordered her to sail, which she did. All that was possible was urged in the master's favour by the Vice-Consul before the court, but unless some facts transpire which are not at present known, it does not appear a case for the intervention of Her Majesty's Government.

IRISH POLICE AND THE UNITED IRISH LEAGUE.

MR. DAVITT: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will consent to an open sworn inquiry in Mayo into certain charges and allegations (to which attention has been drawn in detail) by the honourable Member for South Mayo against police officers, magistrates, and officials of that county, that they have acted illegally on repeated occasions, and with gross political partisanship on others; and have, together with certain landlords and other persons, conspired to implicate the United Irish League in the perpetration of crime by means of forgery and the planning of bogus outrage?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have received from the honourable Member a lengthy statement containing charges and allegations against police officers, magistrates, and officials of the County Mayo. With one of these charges, which relates to the imprisonment of Mrs. Brennan for contempt of court, the Executive have nothing to do. Others are frivolous, and the most important of the remaining charges refer to the case of Sergeant Sullivan, who was tried at the recent Sligo Winter Assizes on the charge of having forged a letter in the name of the president of the United Irish League of West Mayo, inciting to the commission of a Whiteboy offence. The sergeant was acquitted by the jury without having been called upon to enter into his defence, yet the honourable Member asks me to have a further sworn inquiry into the case. With this measure of the degree of credence to be attached to the honourable Member's allegations, I must decline to consent to a sworn inquiry into charges which in so far as they allege culpable conduct against the police or other authorities, do not appear to me to have even a *prima facie* case to sustain them.

THE DOG-MUZZLING ORDER IN MIDDLESEX.

MR. STEPHENS (Middlesex, Hornsey): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, as far as Middlesex is concerned, the muzzling

order will be revoked within the next three weeks?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE: No decision has as yet been arrived at with regard to the revocation of the muzzling order now in force in Middlesex, and so far as I am concerned there is no foundation for the statements on the subject which were published in the newspapers yesterday. They were based, as I am informed, on an inaccurate report of some observations made from the bench at the Brentwood Petty Sessions.

INDIAN SUGAR AND THE BRITISH SWEETMEAT TRADE.

MR. MACLEAN (Cardiff): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, with reference to the statement he made on Tuesday as to the insignificance of the trade in sweetmeats between the United Kingdom and British India, whether he is aware that the total value of this branch of our exports is estimated by competent commercial authorities to be at least £200,000; whether the new duties on all these British goods will be remitted; and, under what statute the Secretary of State claims a dispensing power not to put in force a law duly passed by the Governor-General of India in Council with his express sanction?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: As I stated on the 18th instant the importations of sugar, including sugar candy and confectionery, from the United Kingdom into India, on the average of the four years ending March 1898, were 900 tons a year, and the value of these importations came to an average of Rs. 32,700. I cannot tell on what basis the much larger estimate offered by my honourable Friend is founded. The latest United Kingdom published Returns (for the year 1897) do not bear out that estimate. As regards the remission of the duty, what I stated was that in view of the comparatively small amount of these importations, and the difficulty of estimating the quantities of sugar in a given amount of confectionery, I did not know whether the Government of India would think it worth while to insist on their rights. I have not claimed

any dispensing power such as described in the Question. But the Governor-General in Council has power, under section 22 of the Sea Customs Act, 1878, to exempt any imported goods from the whole or any part of the Customs duties leviable on such goods.

MR. MACLEAN: May I ask whether the Governor-General in Council has put the powers under the Act mentioned into force?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: The Governor-General has the power of exemption, if he wishes to exercise it, and that power has been exercised in the past.

MR. MACLEAN: As the noble Lord seems to dispute the accuracy of my figures, may I, with the indulgence of the House, be permitted to read the particulars upon which they were based, and which have been certified by the Statistical Office of the Custom House in London?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member cannot now discuss the answer of the Government.

MR. MACLEAN: Of course, Sir, I bow to your ruling, but is a Member of this House to have the accuracy of his statement impugned by a Minister and to sit under it without making any correction?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member was proceeding to argue in favour of the accuracy of his figures as against the accuracy of the statement of the Government. He cannot be permitted to do that on a Question.

MR. MACLEAN: No, Sir, I was not proceeding to argue. (Interruption from Ministerial supporters.) If Mr. Speaker orders me to sit down, I will do so. Or I can go over to the other side, if honourable Members wish. (The honourable Member thereupon crossed over to the other side of the House.) I do not wish to argue, Sir, but I have some figures which have been certified by the Custom House and which the noble Lord has contradicted.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: I beg pardon. Not contradicted.

MR. MACLEAN: Well, thrown suspicion upon them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member, I must point out, is raising a discussion upon the Answer given. That cannot be done. If the honourable Member has any further facts to bring out he can put down a further Question on the Paper; he cannot proceed to argue with the view to satisfying the House that his figures are correct.

MR. MACLEAN: Then, Sir, may I after Questions move the adjournment of the House?

[No Reply.]

THE COURSE OF BUSINESS.

MR. LAMBERT: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can now say when the Agricultural Holdings Bill will be introduced?

MR. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN: At the same time may I ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can now state when the Government intend to bring in their Bill for relieving the clergy of a portion of the rates now paid by them, in accordance with the interim Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation?

MR. LEWIS: I beg also to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Agricultural Holdings Bill will be introduced?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: In answer to these Questions I have to say that in the present condition of public business it is quite impossible for me to make any statement on the subject.

MR. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN: Is it the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill dealing with clerical rating at an early date?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: That Question has already been answered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I have nothing to add to his reply.

COMPULSORY SHOP CLUBS BILL.

MR. STRACHEY (Somerset S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what opportunity there will be to consider the Report of the Committee on Compulsory Shop Clubs?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I do not think any opportunity for the discussion of this Report is likely to occur.

MR. LAMBERT: When will the Motion for the Committee on Old-Age Pensions be taken?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I understand honourable Members object to its being taken after 12. I cannot make any promise. Perhaps the honourable Member will put the Question on a future day.

SUPPLY.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfar): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Ordnance Factories Vote and the War Office Vote will be taken to-morrow?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I understand that it will not be in accordance with the wish of honourable Gentlemen opposite that I should take the War Office Vote or the Ordnance Factory Vote to-morrow. Under these circumstances the discussion will be deferred. I propose to begin with Vote 10 and take Votes 7, 8, and 9, and the other Army Votes; also certain uncontroversial Civil Service Votes in Class II., Vote 9, Mercantile Marine Services; Vote 10, Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade; Vote 17, Lunacy Commission; and Vote 25, Office of Works and Public Buildings.

SUSPENSION OF TWELVE O'CLOCK RULE.

Motion made and Question put—

"That the proceedings of the Committee of Ways and Means, if the Committee be sitting at 12 o'clock this night, be not interrupted under Standing Orderittings of the House.—(*The First Lord of the Treasury.*)

The House divided:—Ayes 205; Noes 124.—(Division List No. 87.)

AYES.

Ackland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
 Aird, John
 Alhnsen, A. Henry Eden
 Allsopp, Hon. George
 Arrol, Sir William
 Ascroft, Robert
 Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
 Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
 Bagot, Capt. J. FitzRoy
 Bayley, James (Walworth)
 Ballie, J. E. B. (Inverness)
 Baird, John G. Alexander
 Balcarres, Lord
 Baldwin, Alfred
 Balfour, Rt. Hn A. J. Man'r
 Balfour, Rt. Hn G. W. (Leeds)
 Banbury, Frederick George
 Barnes, Frederic Gorrell
 Barry, Rt. Hn A. H. S. (Hunts)
 Barry, Sir F. T. (Windsor)
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Barton, Dunbar Plunket
 Beach, Rt. Hn Sir M. H. (Bristol)
 Beckett, Ernest William
 Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
 Bethell, Commander
 Biddulph, Michael
 Bigwood, James
 Bill, Charles
 Blakiston-Houston, John
 Blundell, Colonel Henry
 Bolitho, Thomas Bedford
 Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
 Boulnois, Edmund
 Bowles, Capt. H. F. (Middlesex)
 Brodrick, Rt. Hn. St. John
 Carlile, William Walter
 Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
 Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
 Cayzer, Sir Charles Wm.
 Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, E.)
 Chaloner, Capt. R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J.
 Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Cochran, Hn. T. H. A. E.
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
 Cooke, C. W. R. (Hereford)
 Cornwallia, Fienes S. W.
 Cotton-Jodrell, Col. E. T. D.
 Courtney, Rt. Hon. L. H.
 Cross, H. Shepherd (Bolton)
 Cruddas, William Donaldson
 Dalhaic, Col. Philip Hugh
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Denny, Colonel
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers
 Duxford, William Theodore
 Ducombe, Hon. H. V.
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fellows, Hon. Ailwyn E.
 Firbank, Joseph Thomas
 Fisher, William Hayes
 Fison, Frederick William
 FitzGerald, Sir R. Penrose-
 Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Fry, Lewis
 Galloway, William, Johnson
 Garfit, William
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hon. J. Edward
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir J. Eldon
 Goschen, Rt. Hn G. J. (St. Geo.)
 Graham, Henry Robert
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Greene, H. D. (Shrewsbury)
 Greene, W. Raymond (Camp.)
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Gunter, Colonel
 Halsey, Thomas Frederick
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord G.
 Hardy, Laurence
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Haslett, Sir James Horner
 Heath, James
 Helder, Augustus
 Hickman, Sir Alfred
 Hill, Rt. Hn A. S. (Staffs.)
 Hill, Sir E. Stock (Bristol)
 Hoare, E. Brodie (Hampstead)
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Holland, Hon. L. R. (Bow)
 Howard, Joseph
 Howell, William Tudor
 Hozier, Hon. J. H. Cecil
 Hudson, George Bickersteth
 Hutchinson, Capt. G. W. Grice-
 Hutton, J. (Yorks, N.R.)
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Kemp, George
 Kenyon, James
 Kenyon-Slaney, Col. Wm.
 King, Sir Henry Seymour
 Knowles, Lees
 Lafone, Alfred
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawrence, W. F. (Liverpool)
 Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks)
 Lecky, Rt. Hn. W. E. H.
 Leighton, Stanley
 Llewellyn, E. H. (Somerset)
 Loder, Gerald W. Erskine
 Long, Rt. Hn. W. (Liverpool)
 Lopes, Hy. Yarde Buller
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdonna, John Cumming
 Maclure, Sir John William
 M'Arthur, Chas. (Liverpool)
 M'Calmont, Col. J. (Ant., E.)
 M'Yer, Sir L. (Edinburgh, W)
 Malcolm, Ian
 Marks, Henry Hananel
 Mellor, Col. (Lancashire)
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Monckton, Edward Philip
 Monk, Charles James
 Morton, A. H. A. (Deptford)
 Mount, William George
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. G. (Bute)
 Murray, C. J. (Coventry)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hon. Sir H. S.
 Orr-Ewing, Chas. Lindsay
 Parkes, Ebenezer
 Pease, H. Pike (Darlington)
 Pender, Sir James
 Percy, Earl
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Pilkington, Richard
 Platt-Higgins, Fredrick
 Pretymann, Ernest George
 Priestley, Sir W. O. (Edin.)
 Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
 Purvis, Robert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
 Renshaw, Charles Bine
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Ridley, Rt. Hn. Sir M. W.
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. T.
 Robertson, H. (Hackney)
 Rothschild, Hon. Lionel W.
 Round, James
 Roys, Clement Molyneux
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Cheltenham)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Rutherford, John
 Samuel, H. S. (Limehouse)
 Savory, Sir Joseph
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, W. Edward T.
 Sidebotham, J. W. (Chesh.)
 Sidebottom, Wm. (Derbysh.)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Smith, Abel H. (Christch.)
 Smith, J. P. (Lanarksh.)
 Stanley, E. J. (Somerset)
 Stanley, H. M. (Lambeth)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stephens, Henry Charles
 Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir J. M.
 Stone, Sir Benjamin
 Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Ox. Univ.)
 Thorburn, Walter
 Thornton, Percy M.
 Tomlinson, W. E. Murray
 Valentia, Viscount
 Wanklyn, James Leslie
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (I. of Wight)
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Wentworth, B. C. Vernon-
 Whitelev, H. (Ashton-and-L.)
 Williams, J. Powell (Birm.)
 Willox, Sir John Archibald
 Wilson, John (Falkirk)
 Wilson-Todd, W. H. (Yorks)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. S.
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Young, Com. (Berks, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther.

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NOES.

Allan, William (Gateshead)
 Austin, Sir J. (Yorkshire)
 Austin, M. (Limerick, W.)
 Bainbridge, Emerson
 Balfour, Rt.HnJ. B. (Clackm.)
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Bayley, T. (Derbyshire)
 Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
 Billson, Alfred
 Birrell, Augustine
 Blake, Edward
 Bowles, T. G. (King's Lynn)
 Broadhurst, Henry
 Brunner, Sir J. Tomlinson
 Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
 Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
 Burt, Thomas
 Buxton, Sydney Charles
 Caldwell, James
 Cameron, Sir C. (Glasgow)
 Cameron, Robert (Durham)
 Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
 Carmichael, Sir T. D. G.
 Causton, Richard Knight
 Cawley, Frederick
 Channing, Francis Allston
 Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness)
 Dalziel, James Henry
 Davies, M. V. (Cardigan)
 Davitt, Michael
 Dilke, Rt. Hn. Sir C.
 Dillon, John
 Donelan, Captain A.
 Duckworth, James
 Ellis, John Ed. (Notts.)
 Farquharson, Dr. Robert
 Fenwick, Charles
 Ferguson, R. C.M. (Leith)
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Gladstone, Rt. Hn. H. J.
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Gold, Charles
 Gourley, Sir Ed. Temperley

Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Harcourt, Rt. Hn. Sir W.
 Hayne, Rt. Hn. C. Seale-
 Hazell, Walter
 Heaton, John Henniker
 Hogan, James Francis
 Holland, W.H. (York, W.R.)
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Jacoby, James Alfred
 Johnson-Ferguson, Jabez E.
 Jones, W. (Carnarvonsh.)
 Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt.HnSirU.
 Kearley, Hudson E.
 Kinloch, Sir J. G. Smyth
 Kitson, Sir James
 Labouchere, Henry
 Lambert, George
 Langley, Batty
 Lawson, Sir W. (Cumb'land)
 Leese, Sir J. F. (Accring.)
 Leng, Sir John
 Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Lewis, John Herbert
 Lloyd-George, David
 Lowther, Rt. Hn. J. (Kent)
 Macaleese, Daniel
 M'Arthur, W. (Cornwall)
 M'Dermott, Patrick
 M'Ghee, Richard
 M'Kenna, Reginald
 Maddison, Fred.
 Maden, John Henry
 Mellor, Rt.HnJ.W. (Yorks)
 Mendl, Sigismund, Ferd.
 Moore, A. (Londonderry)
 Morgan, J. L. (Carmarthen)
 Morley, C. (Breconshire)
 Morley, Rt.Hn J. (Montrose)
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Norton, Capt. Cecil W.
 Nussey, Thomas Williams
 O'Connor, J. (Wicklow, W.)
 O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)

O'Kelly, James
 Oldroyd, Mark
 Palmer, G. W. (Reading)
 Pease, A. E. (Cleveland)
 Pease, J. A. (Northumb.)
 Pickersgill, Edward Hare
 Pirie, Duncan V.
 Power, Patrick Joseph
 Reid, Sir Robert Threshie
 Richardson, J. (Durham)
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Roberts, J. Bryn (Eifion)
 Samuel, J. (Stockton on Tees)
 Shaw, Chas. E. (Stafford)
 Sinclair, Louis (Romford)
 Smith, Samuel (Flint)
 Souttar, Robinson
 Spicer, Albert
 Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
 Steadman, Wm. Charles
 Stevenson, Francis S
 Strachey, Edward
 Sullivan, Donald (Westmeath)
 Thomas, A. (Glamorgan, E)
 Thomas, D. A. (Merthyr)
 Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Ure, Alexander
 Wallace, R. (Edinburgh)
 Wallace, Robert (Perth)
 Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Weir, James Galloway
 Williams, J. C. (Notts.)
 Wills, Sir William Henry
 Wilson, H. J. (York, W.R.)
 Wilson, John (Govan)
 Woodhouse, Sir J.T. (Hudfd)
 Woods, Samuel
 Young, S. (Cavan, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Hedderwick and Mr.
 Soames.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

WAYS AND MEANS (BUDGET RESOLUTIONS).

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith), CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, in the Chair.]

(In the Committee.)

TEA.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That the Duty of Customs now payable on Tea shall continue to be charged, levied, and paid on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine, until the first day of August, one thousand nine hundred, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say):—

Tea The pound. Four Pence."
 —(Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.)

*Mr. MENDEL (Plymouth): Those of us who, like myself, listened to the exceedingly lucid and luminous speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in introducing the Budget will, I think, agree with me that there was, at any rate in the first portion of the right honourable Gentleman's remarks, nothing except matters to cause satisfaction and pleasure to most honourable Members of this House. The condition of the national revenue and the prosperity of the people evidenced, as the right honourable Gentleman said, by the Bank returns, the railway traffics, and by the condition of the labour market, were all causes for congratulation. What the right honourable Gentleman said, too, by way of warning to those who wished to alter the old-established principles of financial policy in this country and the

danger of a new departure in our fiscal system which has produced the good results shown in our last year's revenue returns, will commend itself to all honourable Members on this side of the House. That warning shows that the right honourable Gentleman at any rate is a free trader, whatever may be the opinion of some of those with whom he acts. This is all the more satisfactory, because previously we had hints and suggestions from various quarters that he intended to depart from the principles of free trade. The only observation I should like to make upon this subject is with regard to the reception the right honourable Gentleman's proposals with reference to the increase in the wine duties met from certain of his own supporters. It appeared to be forgotten by those honourable Members who spoke on this subject that the object of the right honourable Gentleman in imposing that increase was for the purpose of increasing the revenue only, and not as a reprisal against France in order to extort concessions from France. There is one question which I think has not been answered, and that is the effect which the increasing of these wine duties may have upon some of our Colonies. It is quite true that our Colonies have no right whatever to object to our putting duties upon their products, inasmuch as they have no hesitation whatever in putting duties upon our products. Having regard to the fact that there is a very large and growing party in the Australian Colonies who are anxious to encourage the production of wine and to relax the duties levied upon certain British goods, and who are earnestly working for that end, it seems to me that this is not a very fortunate moment for this House to be called upon to increase the duties on Australian wines and to discourage the trade in Australian wines with this country. This trade has grown from practically nothing in a very small space of time, and I have the authority of various Australian producers of wine in stating that a very large increase in their trade is expected within the next few years. I do not think there is anybody on this side of the House who can quarrel with the right honourable Gentleman's proposal with regard to the prolongation of the

terminable annuities which will fall in in the years 1902 and 1904. No doubt this falling in would be inconvenient and exceedingly undesirable, and it is quite right to postpone them, and that will enable a very considerable amount of debt to be redeemed. All that the Chancellor of the Exchequer said about the necessity of reducing our Debt in that part of his speech was admirable, for the generalisations of the right honourable Gentleman were perfect. But when he came to a particular application of them it transpired that he was not in favour of keeping up the Sinking Fund, but of "improving" it by reducing it. He said we were practically to do something quite different to what he said we ought to do in the first portion of his remarks, for when the right honourable Gentleman was leaving his retrospect of the past and his anticipations of the future and came to deal with the question of how to meet the greater portion of the deficit caused not by diminished revenue but by increased expenditure, all cause for satisfaction completely ceased. I say when he came to deal with a deficit that state of things arose, because it is quite obvious that it is this deficit which causes the right honourable Gentleman's proposals for alterations in the arrangement of the redemption of the Debt. It has been attempted to show that the deficit has nothing to do with the question, and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer wanted to reform the Sinking Fund quite irrespective of the state of the national finances. Now, I think that a more extraordinary statement than that it is impossible to conceive. Here you have a country in a state of general prosperity and enjoying a period of peace—I hope it is not an exaggeration to call it a profound peace—and it is surely something more than a coincidence that because the expenditure due partly, of course, to our great armaments, but also largely due to charges on the public revenues which were placed on them by the right honourable Gentleman and by his predecessor the present First Lord of the Admiralty in the interest of particular favoured classes, because that expenditure of the country involves a deficit of £2,750,000, that the fund available for diminution of the National

Debt should be reduced by £2,000,000 out of that £2,750,000. Here we have a sharp issue which divides us from the right honourable Gentleman, though, judging from the speeches made, it does not divide us on this side of the House from some honourable Gentlemen opposite. We have had an opportunity of hearing three or four speeches from supporters of Her Majesty's Government, and they have used arguments with which all of us on this side of the House cordially agree. I think there are a great many others on the opposite side who, although they do not speak, yet in their hearts hold the same opinion as we do on this side with regard to this question. The opinions expressed in the Press have been either lukewarm or absolutely opposed to the suspension of the Sinking Fund, and I think there is only one leading journal which has boldly advocated the course which the right honourable Gentleman has taken. I might also call the attention of the Committee to the fact that two leading and very influential weekly financial newspapers which, so far as politics are concerned, are, I believe, supporters of Her Majesty's Government, have condemned in good round terms the proposal which the right honourable Gentleman has made—I allude to the "Economist" and the "Statist." Now, what is the justification of the proposal which the right honourable Gentleman has made? First of all, is it the great naval and military expenditure of this country? If it were I should not admit the justification. I have supported the Naval Programme of the Government ever since I have been a Member of this House, and the expenditure necessary to keep up an efficient Navy. But the Government ought to have the courage to face the cost of that Naval programme. Imperialism is a fine thing, but, as I understand it, it involves a financial reserve as much as armaments. I was very pleased and interested to read in the speech which the Leader of the House made at the Primrose League meeting yesterday the pregnant correspondence between the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, who said that though this country was not in a condition to withstand invasion while we had a National Debt amounting to £800,000,000, nothing could be done to make it so. The fact is that if

you go to war with a European Power the forces which you have in existence at the outbreak of war will never be sufficient for the purposes for which that war will be carried on. Now, it is for that reason that every other country has a war chest. They store up bullion, but we have preferred a more scientific way, and our war chest is the Sinking Fund. That Sinking Fund is our national insurance fund, and the £2,000,000 which the right honourable Gentleman has taken from that Fund represents a loan for war purposes of over £66,000,000 sterling, and that is what the Chancellor of the Exchequer borrows to-day when there is no war, and when he has no justification for doing so. We hear a good deal about the price of Consols being the reason why the right honourable Gentleman cannot pay off the Debt, and that is the justification of the right honourable Gentleman. I submit that that is no real justification. Why are Consols high? There are a variety of reasons. The chief reason I should imagine, and which I should think no man in this House has any desire to see otherwise, is that, owing to the general prosperity of the country and our financial stability, Consols have been made and are considered the best security in the world. That is an enormous advantage all round, and *inter alia* has made the right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty's successful scheme for the conversion of the National Debt possible. But there is another reason for the high price of Consols which is a contributory reason, and that is the limitations which you put upon so many of our large investing departments to buy Consols only, such as the Savings Banks, the Chancery investments, and all the great Government Departments which come into the market for Consols, and this has a tendency to narrow the market and puts up the price, as the right honourable Gentleman has said, against ourselves. Consequently you have a vicious circle under this system of terminable annuities under which we have to go on investing in Consols, and by that means you raise the price. But the remedy for that, surely, is not to adopt the course of the right honourable Gentleman, but to widen our investing powers in these Government Departments. I have never been able to

understand why they should not invest their money in Corporation Stocks, London County Council Stocks, or Colonial Stocks. If you did that and, as the right honourable Gentleman has suggested, prolonged the existing annuities and set up new annuities, you would be paying off the Debt in the best way possible, without the disadvantage of the present system. But really the right honourable Gentleman's argument as to the price of Consols seems to me to go too far and proves too much. The Leader of the House yesterday really argued that we ought not to buy Consols at 110 at all. But if it is unwise that £7,000,000 or £8,000,000 should be so applied it is only one degree less unwise to buy those Consols to the tune of £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 a year. This argument seems to me not really to be relevant to the principle that we must go on reducing the Debt, but is only relevant to the question whether our present system of reducing that Debt is the best one. The right honourable Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer's argument for reducing the Sinking Fund, that he prevents it growing so large that Parliament would rebel against the application of a huge amount each year, seems to me to be too transparent. To strengthen and safeguard the Sinking Fund by docking it of £2,000,000 seems to me to be regarding it as one of those plants which are stronger for being pruned. It is precisely the same argument as that which was used by the First Lord of the Admiralty in 1887, for the right honourable Gentleman upon that occasion said exactly the same thing, namely, that it was necessary to reduce the Sinking Fund in order to strengthen it. It seems to me that each Chancellor of the Exchequer becomes a kind of guardian angel of the Sinking Fund against his successor, who is a sort of Mephistopheles to be guarded against. We had this argument from the First Lord of the Admiralty, and we have had it also from the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I suppose upon another occasion when we have another Chancellor of the Exchequer we shall have the same argument applied over and over again. It seems to me that this argument about our paying off too much Debt is really an absurd argument.

It is now 100 years since the battle of Waterloo, when in consequence of the war with France the greater part of our Debt accumulated. Since that time we have experienced prosperity in this country which was unknown before, and yet we have not succeeded in the century that has passed in paying off one-third of the Debt as it stood in 1815. Now, what was the whole theory of the Sinking Fund established by the late Sir Stafford Northcote? It was not, as some people have supposed, that we should apply a fixed amount to paying off the Debt, but that that portion of the annual debt charge applicable to the redemption of the Debt should increase year by year in proportion to the reduction of the principal. But look at the statistics with regard to the tax revenue of this country. In the year 1884-85 the tax revenue amounted to £73,750,000, and in 1899-1900 it amounted to £91,500,000. Now, it is rather remarkable that in 1884-85 we applied £6,750,000 to the reduction of the Debt, and this year the Chancellor of the Exchequer says that £7,750,000 is too much. This is an argument which I am bound to say I do not understand. The real fact is that there is the widespread heresy, which I hope is confined to the Benches opposite, that a National Debt is a good thing, and that you ought not to pay it off too fast. That view may exist, and it seems to exist, in the mind of the Treasury, because I notice that in the Treasury Minute they refer to the Sinking Fund as "the most vulnerable portion of the Fund." But there is a serious question which we have to consider, and that is, will you ever be able to increase this Sinking Fund? It has been said that we on this side of the House are opposing this proposal in regard to the Sinking Fund because we hope to make the Government unpopular by so doing. Well, I must say that one of the signs which shows the special cowardice of the present Government lies in the fact that they think, no doubt, that the suspension of the redemption of the Debt is likely to be less unpopular than an increase of taxation. To some extent that may be true at first, though ultimately, of course, every taxpayer will feel the consequences of their policy. I do not see that increased taxation was really necessary if

the Government had had the courage which the Member for West Monmouthshire had in 1894, when he had a larger deficit, and when he did not have an expanding revenue. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire sought new fields of taxation and other sources of revenue, and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer might have done the same. I do not say that he might have taxed ground values, because he would have had too heavy an account to settle with some of his friends if he had made such a proposal, but there are many fields which he might have explored, and upon this point I might make some suggestions. There are two fields to which I suggest to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he might have gone for the purpose of raising fresh taxation. This is an advertising age, which is distinguished by many of the abuses of advertising. But there are also grave disadvantages as well as advantages from an æsthetic and other standpoints. He might have put a useful tax on street advertisements, sky signs, and advertisements in the green fields, and the rather objectionable advertisements which greet our eyes in railway carriages. I think that offers a very excellent field for taxation. It is also, to a large extent, an age in which people go in for every form of amusement, and I should have thought that a small duty on theatre and music-hall tickets might have been imposed. I do not believe that a small graduated duty on these amusements would be very much felt, for I am sure that the right honourable Gentleman would not object to paying a shilling extra for a stall at a theatre, and I do not think the people would have any objection to paying a penny or so more in the cheaper seats. I only mention these things to indicate some of the very many directions in which the right honourable Gentleman might have experimented. He has, however, preferred the less original and less praiseworthy course of laying hands on the ark of the financial covenant, the Sinking Fund of this country. I do not believe that any individual or any nation can be considered secure which lives upon its capital, and that is what these proposals come to. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer has interfered by his proposals with the financial stability of this country, and I very much

regret the way in which he has laid hands upon the Sinking Fund.

*CAPTAIN PRETYMAN (Suffolk, Woodbridge): Many criticisms have been directed against the proposals of this Budget. This House generally assented to the description of this period given by the First Lord of the Admiralty when he described the time through which we were passing, not as a time of unqualified peace but as a period of precarious peace. I think that the money which is derived from the reduction of the Sinking Fund, and which is spent in preparations for war, will be expended to greater advantage than spending money in times of precarious peace, for it will prevent a large increase in the Debt in the future. And now with regard to the argument about the abounding prosperity of the nation. The honourable Gentleman who has just sat down is well versed in commercial affairs, but I should like to know, when he is studying commercial business, whether he looks on one side of his balance-sheet or on both. I should say that when you are studying questions of prosperity you ought to look on both sides of the account. The prosperous man is the man who has what is more than sufficient for his needs. That appears to me to be the real test of prosperity, and on account of this large expenditure which we have had, the nation, at the present moment, has found that the needs have been in excess of the income, although, fortunately, we were prosperous in the sense that our income was very large. That seems to me to be the answer in regard to peace and prosperity. In regard to other features in the Budget, I must say that I think a high compliment was paid to the Chancellor of the Exchequer when, in the criticisms made upon his statement by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton—who is, perhaps, the highest authority on taxation, with one or two exceptions, on the other side of the House—when the only substantial criticism he offered was an attack upon the policy of the Government in having spent money in relief of agricultural rates and rural education. That is a matter of ancient history. [Opposition cries of "No, No!"] Well, I do not wish to deal with it as ancient history, but that is the point of view I wish to approach it from. When a right

Mr. Mendl.

honourable Gentleman rising from his place on the Front Bench on the other side of the House makes a statement that this relief is a "dole to the landlords," I think it is not one which can be too often dealt with. The statement was made that this relief was nothing more nor less than a dole to the landlords, and the right honourable Gentleman has opposed it in his place, not once or twice, but many times; and as the agricultural community may expect that he has a great deal to say, they naturally look with more apprehension upon words such as those which fall from his mouth and from the Front Bench than they would look upon platform utterances. Therefore, to say that this is a dole to the landlords, the right honourable Gentleman meant to say that when in a position to do so he would withdraw that dole. I would ask him, if he found himself in a position to withdraw that dole, who would be affected by it? Would it only affect the landlord, or would he find that there would be an outcry from the agricultural community and the tenant farmer? Would he venture to withdraw the relief which has been given under the Agricultural Rating Act? I cannot think that he would attempt to do it. Now, in order to judge as to the effect of the dole, let us see what is the position of the landlords at the present moment when they have had full advantage of it. I can quote the case of a farm which was let last year. The landlord of that farm has had the full advantage of the operation of the Act, and has got the whole advantage of that dole when he comes to let the farm. Now that farm used to be let at £1 per acre, and the rates were paid by the tenant, and so the £1 went into the pocket of the landlord; that was 50 years ago. Now this farm is let at the rate of 6s. per acre, and the landlord pays 4s. 3d. for tithes, 4d. for land tax, 1s. property tax, and 5d. for insurance, leaving him out of the dole the sum of 11d. per acre, and that is the landlord's share. I would ask what the right honourable Gentleman thinks is the State's fair share of the dole if the landlord gets 11d. Now I come to the use of the word "dole." Can it fairly be argued that it is the same thing as giving a dole? I do maintain that it is wrong for this House to give anything in the nature of a dole to any industry which happens to

be in a condition of requiring assistance, but to remove an unfair burden is an entirely different thing to giving a dole. If it can be shown that the State is imposing on a portion of the community more than it can bear, I say that to remove a fair proportion of that burden cannot be regarded as a dole. That is the position which the agricultural community have always taken up. No doubt, there are innumerable cases in various parts of the country where the landlord is receiving 11d. per acre. He has to maintain the houses and buildings on the estate, which in this particular case are insured for £1,000, and he has imposed upon him many obligations, for which he gets absolutely nothing. Therefore, I think that it is unfair to say that the State, in removing an unjust burden from the owner of that particular farm, has given him a dole, or has acted in any way against the interests of the rest of the community. Further than this, the right honourable Gentleman proceeded to say that there was another dole which had been given to the clergyman in the form of an educational grant to Voluntary schools. I think it is hardly fair to use that expression here, and to say that a dole has been given to the clergy when it was given for the maintenance of rural schools. Can the right honourable Gentleman rise in his place and suggest for one moment that one single farthing of that money has found its way into the pockets of the clergy?

SIR H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I did not use the word in that sense. I said Voluntary schools, and I did not mention the clergy.

*CAPTAIN PRETYMAN: I distinctly heard the word clergyman used, but if the right honourable Gentleman denies it, then I welcome his withdrawal of the statement. If the right honourable Gentleman did not make that statement, it loses a great deal of weight, but the statement has been repeatedly made from the opposite side of the House that this is a dole to the clergy, and to use language of that description when not one farthing of this money is ever likely to come into the possession of the clergy is utterly misleading. Then there is a further statement made by the right honourable Gentleman which I think that he will allow he did make. I refer

to the case of the death duties, upon which the right honourable Gentleman said that the avoidance of those duties was a great misfortune, and he indicated a way in which he thought the period of 12 months should be extended. Now, the right honourable Gentleman is a great authority on taxation, and I speak, therefore, with the greatest diffidence. I wonder if the right honourable Gentleman will allow that one of the first principles of taxation is this: that if you impose a duty which is so unequal and so heavy in its incidence as to become intolerable that tax will be most certainly avoided, and evasion would result. We can apply that also to questions of indirect taxation. What was the first triumph of the younger Pitt in his financial administration? When Mr. Pitt first administered the Treasury, what did he find? There were enormous taxes upon various articles, smuggling was rife, and those indirect taxes were avoided by smugglers. By revising those duties in such a form, and making them of a fairer and even character as regards the various portions of the community, those taxes were reduced, but the revenue from them was largely increased, and exactly the same principle will apply to direct taxation. By means of these death duties direct taxation has been imposed in such a form as to be almost unbearable to a certain section of the community. I do not say that the total sum raised by these duties is greater than the amount of property taxable in this country can bear. I do not say that the total amount is too large, but I do say that, by the way these duties are administered and the manner in which they fall, they have inspired a large section of the community with such terror and such dread of these duties that they certainly will, and do, take every possible means of avoiding them. The real remedy to this question of avoidance is not the old and played-out remedy of putting on the screw more tightly, because such a course will essentially and inevitably fail, because you cannot drive Englishmen in that way. What you have to do is to face the question that there are just and reasonable complaints in regard to these duties which have to be faced, and should be attended to by this House. For my own part, if once these duties were put upon a fair basis, I would do all in my power to stop the avoidance of

them. So long as we have not only complaints of the incidence, but more especially of the administration of this Act, I think it is vain to ask this House to strengthen the hands of the Government by inserting provisions which will tighten the screw upon the classes affected. I want to give a particular instance which is germane to this question in regard to the administration of this Act. In the first place, I think, in regard to the character of the Act itself, we may fairly take the opinion of Lord Macnaghten, who, in delivering a recent judgment, said—

"The other provisions of the Act which were dragged into the discussion, rather unnecessarily, as it seems to me, are strangely confused and singularly ill drawn."

And, secondly, he says—

"It is difficult to see what else it could possibly mean. But, at any rate, it is a comfort to find something in the Act about which there can be no dispute."

And, thirdly—

"Whatever the meaning of that section may be, as to which I do not hazard a conjecture."

And, fourthly—

"Some people think the Act a harsh Act as it stands. It would be intolerable if it could be construed as the Commissioners desire to construe it."

And, further, he says—

"That sub-section is not an easy one to construe, and I am not satisfied that I have quite mastered the meaning of it."

Now, if the House of Lords, which is the highest legal authority in this country, are unable to master the meaning of this Act, and if they are further of opinion that if it could be construed as the Commissioners desire to construe it it would be intolerable, I think a fair case has been made out for the Act being examined with regard to some of its imperfections being removed. What was the particular case? It is not for me to say anything about the legal points involved when there was a plain issue involved. I think the House is competent to judge whether such a case should have been taken into the courts at all. I can give a perfectly plain case as to what would have happened. Take an ordinary case of a large estate worth

£400,000 in the country. The owners might borrow £100,000 to make a railway. Having made the railway, they sell it to the local company, and they take shares. Their estate has a mortgage of £100,000, and they have got that much stock. Consequently they are no better off than they were before. If the contentions of the Commissioners had been held they would have claimed, and been entitled to, full duty on £100,000 without any deduction for the mortgage and the £100,000 stock. They would claim, therefore, not upon £400,000, but upon £500,000. Now, that amounts to the action of a tradesman who sends his bill in twice over. Is it to be maintained that the Treasury are to be authorised to act outside the ordinary rules which govern business transactions between debtor and creditor in this country? It has been proved that their contention in this case was wrong in law, and I think this is agreed also, that it was immoral in the first instance. I think we have a just right of complaint that subjects should have to defend themselves in courts of law, for it is not only illegal but immoral. What is the result? Why this—that not only is the difficulty in construing this Act experienced in the House of Lords, but it applies to all the different courts in this country, and, in regard to small estates, people do not know when death occurs what amount of duty they will have to pay. They have to rely upon the information they obtain from the Inland Revenue Department, and I believe they do their best to give that information. But what is the result of it? That a long period of delay invariably occurs before an account can be settled, and during the whole of that period of delay 3 per cent. interest is charged to the unfortunate executor. Consequently, the Treasury loses nothing by the delay, because they cannot get 3 per cent. for this money; and if during this delay the interest is going into the Treasury, it is not in their interest to expedite matters. Unfortunately, the estate has to pay 3 per cent. during the whole time of the delay, for which the law is entirely responsible. I think that question should be taken into consideration; and, further than that, where the executors are prepared to pay, as they constantly are, a sum of money down, in the first instance, before the

account is actually concluded, I think some discount ought to be allowed. At the present time no discount is allowed, but interest is charged. Then, again, there is the question of getting the certificate after the account has been cleared. You never know what charge may subsequently be brought against the estate, and any division becomes extraordinarily difficult. These points are of enormous importance, especially to small estates, and I venture to draw the right honourable Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer's attention particularly to the first subject I touched upon. I think this Government have not been thanked often enough for the only substantial relief which the agricultural industry have ever received. Naturally, with regard to the death duties, they also look to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give them similar relief in connection with this Measure. I ask nothing unreasonable, for I think this Act has been long enough in force for us to see what points require revision. Therefore, the Chancellor of the Exchequer may fairly be asked if he cannot see his way to have some form of inquiry held into the working of this Act, so that some of these hardships and inequalities may be removed. There was one other subject which I should like to say a word upon, and that is to express my great regret that no mention has been made in the Budget of any relief being given to the clergy in regard to the rating on tithes. Of course, I am aware that it is possible that relief may be given through a Bill in some other form, but, at the same time, we shall have no opportunity of calling attention to this matter except in the Budget, and I think the case for the clergy at this moment is as strong as any case which has ever been brought before this House. I am perfectly aware that there is no single class of the community which is not in its own opinion overtaxed, but in this case the question of poverty has not only to be considered. It is not a question of giving special assistance to a certain class of the community, but it is a question of removing unjust taxation. Now, in this case the question of policy not only has to be considered because it is not such a question as we were discussing last night. It is not a question of special assistance to a certain class

of the community, but relief from, and the removing of, unjust taxation. In regard to that the clergy occupy a special position. In 1896 a Resolution was passed by this House almost unanimously, at the instance of the honourable Member for Essex, that the clergy were overtaxed, and ought to be relieved. The question has been referred pending the report of the Local Taxation Commission; we have now before us an interim report on this very question, and the report says—

“Although some undoubted grievances have existed for many years, no measures for their relief have yet been adopted. On the contrary, their position has gradually been rendered worse, owing to the passing of certain Acts of Parliament, and also by decisions of the courts.

Again, they say—

“We know of no other class of ratepayers whose basis of assessment results in the contribution of so large a proportion of income towards local taxation.”

And, in conclusion, they say—

“The burden of local taxation upon the owners of tithe-rent charge not severed from the benefice is unduly onerous.”

Stronger words than those could not be used; and then they further say, the case should be met by some form of financial relief. That report is signed by 12 out of 13. With regard to the position of the clergy themselves, what is it? I can give you a case of a clergyman whose gross income is £104 from tithe, and out of that sum he has to pay 3s. in the £ rates. Now, we have arguments used in this House to show that 8d. in the £ will fall very heavily on the shoulders of those who have to pay it. Of course, there is a rebate on income up to £800, and an exemption on incomes under £150; but here you have £104 bearing an income tax of 3s. in the £. Surely, that is a case which ought to be dealt with. The clergyman in that position has no greater income, and is in a very much worse position than a leading artisan in any of our great towns. The artisan earns more than £104, and, if he does not, in regard to that income, he pays no tax, except of course indirectly, in beer and tobacco. Here is a clergyman who has to contribute to the calls of his neighbour, and who has many

calls upon him, and whose income is less than that of the artisan, and upon which he has to pay 3s. in the £. Taxation is a matter of expediency rather than of justice, but a case has been made out in favour of the clergy, first by this House, and secondly by the Royal Commission, and it has been constantly ignored; but I hope, for their own sake, and for that of their Party, that the Government will do something this Session to relieve the clergy of the injustice from which they are suffering.

*MR. HALDANE (Haddington): In the able speech just delivered by the honourable Member for Woodbridge, the honourable Member has dealt with three positions—the doles, the Budget, and the clergy. It is with regard to the first two of these that I should like to make a few observations. In the Committee it would not be in order to discuss the policy of what is called the Doles Act, and I do not propose to do so. I only propose to make one observation in reply to what fell from the honourable Member. I do not think that he was justified in speaking of the agricultural rate as being only a contribution to agricultural assessment; on the contrary, I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer will find before very long that the boroughs, who have non-agricultural as well as agricultural subjects, are interested in this subject as well as other parts of the country, though from a different point of view. The boroughs are finding out that not only are the taxes which they pay being used as a source of doles to their agricultural neighbours, but they are also finding out in respect of new rates since the passing of the Act that a large class of subjects are withdrawn from the purview of their rating, so that the rating falls more heavily on those who are left to bear it. I have been engaged for the last few weeks in a correspondence with the authorities of one of the boroughs which I represent—a borough which, I regret to say, has always been renowned for its principles of high conservatism—in which I have been at great pains to explain that the Government are not such dishonest people as this borough now appears to think, because the whole matter was fully explained and warning was given by the Opposition when the

Captain Pretymann.

Government introduced their Bill. When the time comes for the review of the provisions of that Act, I think the discussion will extend itself beyond the point to which the honourable Gentleman has referred. The honourable Gentleman went on with his next subject—the subject of the death duties, upon which he speaks with the knowledge of an expert—and the honourable Member spoke in somewhat deprecating terms of the drafting of that Finance Act. I take a different view. It was passed with great difficulty, and in the Legacy and Succession Duties Acts you have the same problems of construction to deal with. When the legacy duties were first imposed their provisions gave rise to a great deal of hardship, and the tax was regarded as an unjust tax; but in the working out of the provisions at the courts we got accustomed to it. In the Succession Duties Act, in 1853, there were a great many disputes between Her Majesty's subjects and the Crown. Yet the Act is now looked upon as one of the masterpieces of legislation. I think the honourable Gentleman will find—and it is the opinion of some of our most distinguished conveyancers—that among people who are best qualified to judge, that Act is considered one of the best specimens of draftsmanship that we have in modern Statutes. That Act was prepared by my right honourable Friend the Member for West Monmouth, with the assistance of Sir Henry Jenkyns and Sir Alfred Milner, two of the most distinguished public servants the Treasury has ever had. When my right honourable Friend looks back upon the working of that Act he will have no cause for regretting it. There are some points upon which friction has arisen, but those are, in the main, small points, though I should like to see them redressed; they are more apparent than real. But the Measure, treated as a whole, is both wise and just. There are, no doubt, cases in which the payment of duty is evaded, which ought not to escape, and several of them have lately been occupying the attention of the judges. In these, and other matters, it is possible that the Act might be revised so that they might be dealt with, but the Act as a whole is a good one, and one that has, in its working out, been

marvellously clear. I cannot help thinking that some of the criticisms which have been made to-night need not have been made at all. I do not say there are no difficulties, because there are questions which invariably arise, but there ought to be no difficulty hereafter. I wish to say also that I think there is room for improvement in the machinery by which the duties are collected. I quite agree that the time has come for the reconsideration of the whole matter of the Finance Act, although that is a question which I do not propose to discuss now; but the time has come when there ought to be a reconsideration of its administration, with a view, on the one hand, of getting rid of the present sources of friction, and, on the other, bringing in those cases which ought to be under the Act. There are one or two other points to which I want to refer before the Vote comes on. With regard to the Sinking Fund, from which the right honourable Gentleman has taken £2,000,000, the argument which he advances really tells more in favour of raising the provision which is made for the reduction of the Debt than for reducing it. I could never see the reason why the Government should not invest in securities other than Consols, such as the stock of large corporations which are practically quite as good. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would have to select them, and that might be a matter of some delicacy or difficulty, but if you balance the advantages with the disadvantages you will find the one far outweighs the other. Then I come to another thing. The Chancellor of the Exchequer wants to invest his money, and Consols are very high. Why not go to India? There is no greater benefit that we could confer on India than to apply some of our free cash in loans to her, or in the purchase of her securities which are trust securities, and which have been recommended for investment of trust moneys. I do not see why what is good enough for a trustee to invest in should not be good enough for the Government. There are other securities which ought to be brought within the scope of trustees; and I do think that the Government would do very much better by enlarging the scope of the investments which are in the discretion of trustees under wills and marriage settlements, and thus

relieve them from being pressed by beneficiaries to invest a trust in a mortgage of real estate, which is nominally within the trust deed, but the character of which in many cases is most rotten and unsatisfactory.

***MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis):** I think the suggestion of the honourable and learned Member to allow the trustees to invest in other securities would only have the effect of raising these securities to over par—some of them are over par already—and, therefore, would rather add to, than diminish, the difficulties of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. As a humble student of the death duties under the Gamaliels of the Front Opposition Bench, I hold that the mistakes in the administration of the law have been wrongly shouldered on the Commissioners of Inland Revenue. I believe the Commissioners have been right throughout, and whenever they have been wrong it has been either through the blunders of the law officers of the Crown or through the inadequate or improper directions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The evasion of the death duties which I always thought the most wanton was committed by the right honourable Gentleman himself (Sir William Harcourt) when he directed the Inland Revenue Commissioners, against their advice, to let the Emperor of Russia off the duty on £200,000. The next great blunder was committed in the Beech case, through the mistaken advice of the law officers of the Crown. The death duties show a far larger increase than any other item of taxation, in spite of the fact that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer and the First Lord of the Admiralty predicted enormous evasions. One word with regard to the Beech case. That case, with its corollary, affects the whole question of settled property. If the second case goes against the Government, the whole estate duty on settled property, which amounts to something like £2,000,000 a year, will be placed in peril. One word as to the proposed new stamp duties. I have obtained a few figures from the City, in order to show the extraordinary way in which these new stamp duties will act on foreign securities, which I should like to bring before

the attention of the right honourable Gentleman, because I think he can scarcely have considered the extraordinary variations in the burden. I will take two securities. There is, first of all, what is called the Anaconda Copper Mine Shares. These are £5 shares, and their present price is £9 10s. Ten shares, or £50 of nominal capital, would be worth £95. The tax on them is 2s. 6d., or 0.131 per cent. Then, I will take the Cedula "P" bonds, of £1,600 each, at 6½ per cent. That produces £100, and the tax on it is £4, or 30 times as much per cent. as it is upon the Anaconda Copper Mine Shares. These figures suffice to show that while in one case certain stock will be taxed only 0.131 per cent., in the other case it will be taxed 4 per cent. Probably the right honourable Gentleman had not realised this when he settled the rate of taxation, and I think it cannot be beyond the resources of the Treasury to find some means by which these extraordinary differences in the percentage in the tax may be got over. Well, Sir, one word as to the wine duty. When the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Forest of Dean pointed out that the importation of wine from the colonies was increasing the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that that was not the case. But I really think, if he looks over a series of years, he will find it has very considerably increased.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER (Sir M. H. BRACH, Bristol, W.): I said that for the last three years it had remained practically the same.

***MR. GIBSON BOWLES:** It may be practically the same for those years, but if the right honourable Gentleman looks back 20 years he will see that there has been a great increase. I attach the greatest importance to our getting every article we possibly can from the Colonies. Your Colonies are your best customers. Everything you can do to increase the prosperity of the trade of the Colonies increases the population of the Colonies, increases the emigration to the Colonies, and breeds your own customers. Now, let me ask the Committee to consider the figures I have taken from the Statistical Abstract. I find that, taking the population of the world to be

Mr. Haldane.

1,140,000,000, the average foreigner takes £0.135 per head of our exports, but the average British Colonist takes £3.106 per head. The average of the four best foreign customers of British produce—namely, Russia, Germany, France, and the United States—is £0.223 per head, while the average of the four best British Colonies—Canada, Australasia, the Cape, and the West Indies—as I have said, is £3.106 per head. The final result of these figures is to show that the average British Imperialist is worth, as a customer, two average foreigners, and that the average British Colonist is worth 14 of the best four nations of foreigners, and worth no less than 23 average foreigners. That really seems to me to suggest that there should be some differentiation in these wine duties in favour of the Colonies; in other words, that we should let the Colonies off the new duties entirely. The amount will be small, and the only reason that I can conceive for hesitating is that it may possibly excite the animosity, the anger, and the retaliation of foreign powers. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer says that the fear is a bogey which ought to be put aside, and tells us it is our business to arrange our tariff for our own benefit; and, I would respectfully add, also for the benefit of the Colonies and with a view of increasing the number of our customers. Now, Sir, the right honourable Gentleman admits the enormous increase in the expenditure of this country. He has the most extravagant set of colleagues, as well as the most extravagant set of—well, I don't know what to call them.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): Say supporters.

***MR. GIBSON BOWLES**: Well, the most extravagant set of supporters, that I suppose any Chancellor of the Exchequer ever had to deal with, and the House must deal tenderly with him in his various lapses from strict economy. The right honourable Gentleman says it is all the fault of his supporters—that they voted for the expenditure, and therefore must pay the bill. I remember occasions on which I vainly endeavoured to stem this extravagance, and especially when a Vote of £2,500 was proposed to assist the attorneys in striking each other off the Rolls.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I only carried out a Resolution of the House, which was carried by a large majority.

***MR. GIBSON BOWLES**: Quite so; but when that Resolution was proposed I did not find in the right honourable Gentleman that stern, unbending economy I found in myself, and which I should have expected to find in a still greater degree in the right honourable Gentleman. Before leaving this matter I may perhaps be allowed to remind the Committee of certain information given in the accounts. The Exchequer issues are given as £108,150,000. But that is not all the expenditure. To that we must add the sum diverted to local taxation account, £9,521,000; appropriations in aid, £5,899,808; receipts by Departments paid out by them, £1,550,000; and the mercantile marine fund, £650,000, making a total expenditure of £17,620,000; so that instead of the total expenditure being £108,150,000 it is £125,770,808. The £17,620,000 intercepted never appears in the account at all; though the Chancellor of the Exchequer put a note with regard to a portion of it into his yearly accounts. Then the local expenditure for 1898-9 was £97,000,000. If you deduct from that £12,000,000, which represents the contribution by the Government to that taxation, you have £85,000,000 of local taxation. Add this to the £125,700,000, and there is a gross total of over £210,000,000.

SIR H. FOWLER: The sum put down for local taxation also includes reproductive investments by local authorities.

***MR. GIBSON BOWLES**: Well, it is an arguable question whether reproductive expenditure ought to be charged. But sometimes it is not reproductive, and causes loss. At any rate it is expenditure. I now come to the debt. From 1816 to 1860 this country never put aside less than £28,000,000 a year for the reduction of the Debt, and at that time the income of the country was far less than it is now. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has suggested that the amount set aside permanently for the service of the Debt should vary in accordance to the amount

of the Debt. I cannot see any principle underlying this. It seems to me that the true proportion should be according to the national income. When your income is small you cannot afford to pay off much of the Debt, but when your income increases you can afford to pay off more of it, and there is no better purpose to which you can apply it. In the year 1860 the income tax produced £1,150,000. It now produces £2,250,000 as nearly as possible, so that instead of paying off £28,000,000 of our Debt I think if you are going to pay it off in proper proportion to revenue you ought now to pay off £56,000,000. That is my view, but it is apparently not the one which is held by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Well, Sir, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that in renewing the expiring annuities he is following the precedent of 1883. In point of fact, he is departing from it. There were some very remarkable words used upon this question by Mr. Gladstone. Speaking in 1881, Mr. Gladstone said—

“The time has come when we may properly make a further provision for the reduction of debt by a change which I will describe—by the conversion of a portion of the short annuities which will expire in 1885 into large annuities that will not expire until 1906. The effect of that conversion, of course, is to liberate a very considerable annual sum. I should regard it as a wholly illegitimate proceeding to apply any portion of the sum so liberated in favour of the Ways and Means of the year. I propose to use it to the last farthing in the reconversion of stock into those longer annuities expiring in 1906.”

Therefore I think it must be admitted that the precedent of 1883 has not been followed. But there is one other point. The right honourable Gentleman is passionately excited over the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1902, and he finds it necessary to deal in 1899 with the future position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am inclined to say, as Sir Stafford Northcote said in 1883—

“That is a proposal which is entirely within the lines of the legislation of 1875, and a very proper proceeding it is, subject to qualification. But I want to know why it should have come this year, and do you thereby gain any advantage over the more simple process of waiting till 1885, when the annuities fall in, before you deal with the amount?”

That question was put by Sir Stafford Northcote in 1883, and it is a question which I feel inclined to put again in

1899. The Chancellor of the Exchequer always likes to hear extracts of his speeches, and I will give the answer in an extract. In 1896 he said—

“We shall be within measurable distance of the time when we shall have to choose between diminishing or putting an end to the reduction of our National Debt or an increase of taxation.”

Well, he has chosen the first of these two alternatives. Then he proceeds to say—

“I do not envy the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whoever he may be, who has to impose increased taxation to a very large extent upon our present financial system.”

One other point, Sir. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to think it is a deplorable thing for the Debt of the country to be above par. So does the First Lord of the Treasury. The First Lord of the Treasury, in an elementary speech on finance delivered to the Primrose Leaguers yesterday, explained that in consequence of Consols being above par investors must suffer a loss, and that we might just as well throw money into the sea as pay off the Debt under such circumstances. This is most enlightening. The right honourable Gentleman seems to think that the State has always borrowed money at £100. To a large extent the State has borrowed at £70, or £80, or £90 per cent. of the nominal £100, and “par” is therefore strictly and really £70, or £80, or £90. Yet, strange to say, the terrors of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and of the First Lord of the Treasury begin at £100. The Chancellor of the Exchequer foresees that unless he reduces the Sinking Fund his successor might have too much money, and he says to himself: “There may be a Chancellor of the Exchequer who may not be characterised by my austere virtue. He may come from West Monmouth, or Wolverhampton, or possibly from Scotland. He may be profligate, he is certain to be frail. He may take this large sum, and with it reduce the duty of 35 per cent. now imposed on tea, or that of 200 per cent. on spirits, or of 247 per cent. on tobacco. He may squander it in giving doles to his friends among the agricultural classes, or in setting up a system of local government, calculated to advance the sacred

cause of Home Rule in Ireland. I will not expose my future Friend to this temptation; he shall not be under this sore trial. I will remove the temptation by removing the money, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer of 1902, when he comes into being, will remember me with gratitude and affection, and he will thank the Fates which have raised me up to preserve him from the most deadly and dangerous situation in which any financier can find himself—that of having too much revenue and too little debt.”

***Mr. J. LOWTHER** (Isle of Thanet):

At the risk of disturbing the effect of the amusing speech to which we have just listened from the honourable Member for King's Lynn, I ask the Committee to turn their attention for a moment to a subject of a somewhat more prosaic character—the wine duties. As regards the wine duties as a whole, no doubt there has been a good deal of criticism on the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I do not think my right honourable Friend need pay very much attention to the criticisms directed against the major portion of the proposal to increase the duties on foreign wines, as that, I think, is a matter on which the public opinion of the country, whatever views we may entertain, is not very profoundly expressed. But, as regards that portion of the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer which includes the tax upon the wines imported from British possessions, that is a matter on which very strong feeling has been aroused. My right honourable Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has very properly declined to commit himself prematurely to any opinion as to any alteration of his proposals until he has received a deputation which will furnish him with information that will enable him to deal with the Colonial wine trade. Under these circumstances, of course, I shall not attempt to induce the right honourable Gentleman to break silence or to forestall the declaration which in due course he will, no doubt, make. But I would point out to my right honourable Friend that he has now a great opportunity, and the House of Commons have a great opportunity, as regards our relations to our Colonies. If you ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer thus late in the day, to

make any very serious departure from the framework of the Budget and to modify his proposals in a radical sense, I could understand his offering very great objection if we asked him to forego a prospective revenue which would necessitate the imposition of taxation in its place or in other respects very seriously compromise his general scheme. I could understand my honourable Friend appealing to his Party and his friends, and asking them not to press or enter upon any such scheme. My right honourable Friend is to meet a deputation who will submit to him proposals which emanate from the Colonies; if I am right in thinking that the amount at stake, the prospective estimated revenue is only the infinitesimal sum of £20,000 a year—if that be the case the Chancellor of the Exchequer will realise that he has now in his power, by remitting this duty in the case of Colonial wine, to meet a very strong and growing feeling amongst Her Majesty's Colonial subjects, that something ought to be done to encourage trade between the Mother Country and the Colonies and to satisfy the aspirations of the Colonies. I think that this is an opportunity which should not be thrown away. I would wish in this connection to entirely disassociate what I have now mentioned to the Committee from other general opinions which I have felt it my duty to lay before the House of Commons on perhaps too frequent occasions. This is not a matter of protection or free trade at all. It is a question which must be judged entirely on its merits. It has no connection with fundamental principles and universal terms. My right honourable Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies has given forcible expression to his desire to promote this principle of preferential trade within the Empire. I believe the right honourable Gentleman is a member of the Cobden Club, and his opinion certainly would not be classified in any shape or form with those fiscal opinions which I have the misfortune to maintain. But what does the Secretary for the Colonies say? He says—

“There is a universal desire amongst all the members of the Empire for a closer union between the several branches, and, in their opinion, it is desirable, nay, it is essential for the existence of the Empire as such.”

The right honourable Gentleman goes on to say—

"Experience has taught us that this closer union can be most hopefully approached, in the first instance, upon its commercial side."

Now, here is an opportunity of promoting that which the Colonial Secretary says is essential to the existence of the Empire, at a ridiculously small cost. I am not isolating the Secretary for the Colonies from his colleagues. The Prime Minister has recognised the very great importance of the trade carried on within the Empire itself. He said in my hearing on one occasion when I had the honour to introduce a deputation to him—

"It is to the trade that is carried on in the Empire of the Queen that we must look for the vital force of the commerce of this country."

I could multiply quotations from prominent Members of the Government—even from that neophyte in finance, as he has just been described, my right honourable Friend the First Lord of the Treasury, in support of these views. But what I should like to point out especially is this: that the Colonies have made an approach to us by giving us something which would entitle them to a return. The Dominion of Canada has granted a distinct and appreciable preference in its tariff to the products of this country. Of the Colonies as a whole, Canada is the only one which has acted as yet on that principle in a practical way; but other Colonies have endorsed the principle. At the Imperial Conference held in Ottawa a Resolution was unanimously passed—

"That provision should be made by Imperial legislation enabling the Dependencies of the Empire to enter into agreements of commercial reciprocity, including the power of making differential tariffs with Great Britain, or with one another."

Well, that prayer of the Ottawa Conference has been answered. Her Majesty's Government have got rid of those entangling engagements which stood in the way of the British Empire entering into closer commercial relations with its dependencies in the same way as every other country has done. That being so, and Her Majesty's Government having realised the importance, and the necessities of the case, having removed

all the difficulties in the way by denouncing the Treaties with the German Zollverein and with Belgium, to the consequent disturbance of commercial relations with these two important States, having removed the incidental difficulties under the most-favoured-nation clause, having faced all that and recovered our freedom of action, I think this is a golden opportunity to establish a claim to the gratitude and co-operation of our Colonial fellow-subjects, if we accede to the very earnest remonstrances and suggestions they are now making, and to gratify, at the paltry cost of £20,000, the Imperial instincts of our fellow-subjects beyond the sea. That being so, I hope my right honourable Friend will in due course signify his own desire and that of his colleagues to grant this very earnest request on the part of our fellow Colonial subjects. I would not have said this to-night had not my right honourable Friend let drop, in answer to a Question put to him in the House, that his mind was open on this matter, and that he was desirous of obtaining information which he had not, and that up to now he had not been able to entertain the petition, the prayer of which I hope he will eventually see his way to grant. I wish to say a few words as to the exploded doctrine of economy. I am afraid I am the only Member of this House who has ventured, year after year, to say a word on behalf of that absolutely exploded doctrine. Ministers nowadays, so far from having economy urged upon them, as was the case in my early Parliamentary days, are goaded into extravagance by friend and foe alike. My right honourable Friend the Member for West Monmouth will bear me out that when he and I first engaged in Parliamentary life the private Members almost invariably brought forward on Tuesdays and Fridays urgent remonstrances against the extravagance of the Government of the day, and that the Opposition almost invariably denounced the sins of their Ministerial opponents. But it is the fashion in these latter days, at any rate, only to pretend to be in favour of economy. The motto, "bless the expense," is the only political doctrine that is thoroughly popular nowadays on both sides of the House. In some quarters there is still a lingering feeling that something should be said about economy. There were

some valiant spirits who suggest that the Navy should be cut down, and others that the recruiting for the Army should be stopped. The honourable Baronet the Member for Cockermouth is the only survivor of that small section of the House which used to move that the Army should be reduced by 10,000 men; but nobody supports him, and nobody ought to support him. When, however, the Civil Service Estimates come on for consideration Members in all parts of the House jump up, not to suggest reductions, but to suggest huge additions to the expenditure. Questions are asked as a matter of business, day after day, which imply huge additions to the Civil Service Estimates. If I may venture to say so, the worst offenders are the Committee of Council on Education. That mysterious body appears to have an enormous gullet wherein to bestow the taxation of the people; and any attempt to reduce our educational expenditure is denounced from all parts of the House. If there is any one system worse than another it is the system of subventions—that is to say, the system of giving to public bodies other people's money to spend. Well, now, we know that public bodies are only too free in spending the rates which their own immediate constituents have to provide, but when they get a fund that comes out of someone else's pocket their extravagance knows no bounds. Take the case, for instance, of that extremely absurd arrangement which was made between my right honourable Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty and Mr. Acland, under which large sums of money are handed over to the county councils annually to be spent on what is called, but very improperly called, technical education. A great part of that money was originally intended by Parliament for a wholly different purpose. I do not want to go into the controversies on that point, but when that money was handed over to the local authorities only a portion of it was ear-marked for technical education, and one half of it was distinctly indicated as to be employed in the relief of the ratepayers. But now it is all spent, for the most part, on what is improperly called technical education. What really happens is this. The Committees say to the county councils, "It does not matter; here you have this money that comes to us from the liquor trade, or

from one source or another; we have got it to spend; let us make the freest use of it we can." The consequence is that a large proportion of that money is scandalously wasted. And I fear I must apply the same remark to a very large proportion of the ordinary educational expenditure. It is, for the most part, squandered away to unfit large numbers of children for their condition in life. I have shown enough to convince the Committee that all of us are very largely to blame for these bloated Estimates, which we do nothing to curtail, but are largely guilty of contributing to their increase. As regards the question of the sources of taxation, that is a subject that is altogether too serious to enter upon now. I demur altogether to the figures for which the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton made himself responsible the other day when addressing his constituents, although undoubtedly he corrected a very palpable error into which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had fallen a few years ago as to the relative proportions of direct and indirect taxation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that direct taxation contributed 52 per cent. of the revenue; the taxation from the other classes, which he called the consuming classes, contributed 48 per cent. Well, I pointed out that the unfortunate bearers of that direct taxation were bound to be consumers also, and that in their capacity of consumers there were arrayed against them figures to which they themselves had contributed. But my right honourable Friend never denied what was uttered by him—namely, that the bearers of direct taxation contributed as such 48 per cent. of the taxation, and the consuming classes 52 per cent. I have, of course, pointed out that that was a very crude way of putting it, and it was very liable to be misunderstood. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton declared that, according to the calculations he had made, 45 per cent. only was contributed by the payers of indirect taxation. For he took into account the very elementary fact omitted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the payers of direct taxes were also consumers. I am rather curious to know where the right honourable Gentleman got his figures, although I have no doubt

he has a perfect groundwork for the statement he made. I hope that the right honourable Gentleman will, at some time or other, give some indication how he arrived at his conclusion, for I think he has overlooked several considerations which would have very greatly affected his total. At any rate, we are in this position, that, while direct and indirect taxation may be nominally pretty level one with the other, our indirect taxes are levied upon a dangerously small number of articles. The moment anyone suggested an additional item he is apt to get upon controversial ground, but I think there are a great number of items which would occur to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as being deserving of his consideration in respect of any readjustment of taxation. I think it is enough at the present moment to point out that the dangerous practice followed last year of taking off a large sum from an indirect tax, which you know is very difficult to impose again when the money is required, is one which the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought seriously to take to heart as a warning. My right honourable Friend still maintains that he was well advised in taking off a portion of that duty. I daresay I repeat myself several times over by calling his attention to the fact that I was almost the only person who took serious objection to his proceeding last year. The Chancellor of the Exchequer defended it on the ground that the indirect tax payers had largely contributed towards the surplus, but I reminded him that if he remitted that indirect tax, it would be very difficult for him to resume the burdens when the receipts from that source failed. My right honourable Friend has found that difficulty this year. I trust that when the time comes for the reconsideration of our financial system, which everyone admits cannot be far distant, these old-fangled prejudices, as I must call them, will be relegated to a place to which I need not further refer. For we are told that if we suggest any addition to indirect taxation we are placing unfair taxes upon the great masses of the people. I should bore the Committee if I once more warned them that one of the reasons why the old cry of economy has died out—one that we would do well to bear in mind—is, that

in the days I speak of the House of Commons represented to a larger extent than it now does the taxpayers of the country, whereas at the present moment the persons who pay the piper are not those who call the tune. For that reason I hope that some system of just taxation of an indirect character will be proposed to Parliament which will ensure a fair contribution all round.

MR. H. BROADHURST (Leicester): I agree with some parts of the speech made by the right honourable Gentleman who has just sat down when he was referring to the increased expenditure represented by the doles to local authorities. I think with him, and my experience supports me in this, that in local administration the money sent down by Parliament to local bodies is not always used as wisely and well, and as economically disposed of, as money raised direct through the rate collectors of the local rates. All of us who have had experience in our boroughs or counties will agree with the right honourable Gentleman in that respect. I have often heard remarks made in connection with the appointment or with the increase of a salary of a local official, that the Government paid half of the salary and therefore they could afford, with an easy conscience, an increase to these salaries. I have had considerable experience of that, and I do think it would tend to economy in all directions if some better system were invented, and the present system abandoned altogether. I think if the right honourable Gentleman had followed this subject a little further he would have been able to show that as these subventions had increased, that is, as the Votes in aid of local authorities had increased, so the local rates had increased proportionately, instead of being lowered. In my opinion these Imperial subventions have in a large measure tended to increase local taxation, and not to relieve it. My object in rising was not to deal with that particular subject. I cannot follow the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Thanet in his complaint as to the large sums voted for educational purposes. I think that most of us who have studied the needs of the nation, and of the competition to which we are subjected by educated foreign nations, rather regret that larger sums

Mr. J. Lowther.

are not voted for that purpose instead of smaller sums. It is a particular complaint against the sums voted for technical educational purposes that the county councils have that large sum of money to dispose of, and that if it was used to the best advantage by the county councils it would undoubtedly do a great deal of good in the country. I maintain, however, that there is a great deal of good being done at the present moment, although nothing like the amount of good that we ought to obtain from that expenditure. I wish in that respect that we had a much better administration of these large sums of money than we at present have. In regard to the Resolution under discussion, I regret, as I said the other night, and I repeat it again, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget propositions for the present year did not take the opportunity afforded by his extraordinary revenue to give some measure of relief to those who most needed relief in taxation, and who are most entitled to it, namely, the poor, who obtain no advantage whatever from the Budget. I had hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have had the courage either to have reimposed, of necessity, the duty on tobacco, or to have increased its reduction. As it now stands it is no good, no benefit to the people. It is only an advantage to the half-dozen or so of the large tobacco merchants in the country. We should have either made the reduction of the duty another 3d. or 4d.—2d. would have done it probably—at any rate 3d. would have made it perfectly clear—or he might have reimposed the 6d. in the pound. I cannot help believing that the Chancellor of the Exchequer sees the mistake he has made and the injustice, to some extent, he has done. I would have liked to have seen the Chancellor of the Exchequer do something in regard to the reduction of the duty on tea. The tea duty brings in, in round figures, a sum of £4,000,000 a year, as I understand. The Chancellor might have taken 2d. per pound off the duty on tea, and that would have been a reduction in taxation which would have been felt in every cottage home in the land. I have no hesitation in saying that the large increase in the consumption of tea by the labouring classes,

even by the agricultural labouring classes, has been enormous within the last 10 years. It is now the habit of farm labourers, and other low paid and unskilled labourers, to take their provision in drink for the day away from their homes in the morning in bottles or in cans. And that drink provision is made entirely from tea. Now, I think it is—whether it may be wise or otherwise on their part to drink this cold tea—it is the practice, and it is the best substitute they can get for beer. They cannot afford beer. The old-fashioned system of home brewing in cottage homes has gone out, for many reasons and from many causes, and the workers are now relegated to the teapot as their only brewing machine for their daily drink. Now, the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to have thought of this class of the community, and to have provided a reduction at the very least of 2d. in the pound on their tea. That would have brought universal satisfaction, and would have done a great amount of good amongst the poorer people. The other classes of the community would not probably have felt the advantage so great. The better-to-do classes can buy a higher quality of tea now than a few years back, and they do not feel the pinch at all; but the 12s. or 15s. a week men, with their families, are those upon whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer has missed an opportunity of conferring a great boon. I wonder whether it is too late for him to do that now. He could do it at the cost of £2,000,000, or less, if I am right. Now there are lots of ways in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer might very well recoup himself of that £2,000,000. I do not think that there are 50 people in the country who would complain if he reimposed the tobacco duty. If he were to go back to the original duty on tobacco he would at once obtain half of the sum necessary to make good the deficiency caused by the reduction in the tea duty. I complained the other night of the Chancellor of the Exchequer having put a higher duty on cheap wines, and at the end of the Debate he was good enough to say that he would give some consideration to the complaint made from various quarters of the House. I indicated that there might be a possibility of getting a relief of taxation on the lower classes of wines. I under-

stand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has held out some hope that he would consider the complaints of those who spoke against the increased taxation of cheap wines.

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER indicated dissent.

MR. BROADHURST: I am very sorry if the right honourable Gentleman has not promised to reconsider the matter, but I hope he will.

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER again indicated dissent.

MR. BROADHURST: Very well, then, there are other means and other directions by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer might meet another £1,000,000 of his deficiency. I do not want to put taxation all on one class of the community, but the right honourable Gentleman might turn his attention very profitably in the direction of the highest classes of foreign cigars imported into this country, and to the most expensive class of wines. Let him relieve the poorer and cheaper wines, which are consumed by the lower middle classes untouched. There are other sources open to the Chancellor of the Exchequer which can be better enforced upon the right honourable Gentleman by honourable Members who are better informed on the subject than I am. These might have directed his attention to mining royalties, from which he might obtain a million or two.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Hear, hear!

MR. BROADHURST: The Chancellor of the Exchequer laughs at the bare idea, but what a magnificent prospect is before him, if he would only apply his mind to the subject of mining royalties and land values. Why, at the slightest touch of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on mining royalties and land values, he would bring in to his exchequer millions of money. He would be in a fairy-land of finance, and happy for evermore. He would be able to release the burdens of the poor in all directions. I do hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will give us some encouragement. If it is too

late for his present Budget, will he promise us, instead of making worn-out speeches—although we are always delighted to read his prelections on current politics—will he promise the Committee that he will be able to give next autumn some considerable attention to these suggested sources of revenue. If we let him off any difficulties in regard to the tea duty this year, will he promise us next year that he will do his best to take off the tea duty, and find some other means of making good the deficiency caused by such reduction? I cannot but pity the unfortunate Chancellor of the Exchequer. He does not drink tea, and the most marvellous thing is how he is able to exist in the successful manner he does. Neither does he smoke. He does not drink coffee or cocoa, nor does he consume sugar, I suppose. How it would add to his sweetness if he would only indulge in some of these light beverages. He does not realise the boon he would confer upon the poor people, and the gratitude he would earn in every cottage home in the land, if he could see his way to give some promise that if he could not reduce the tea duty this year, he would give them a better Budget next year. I sincerely trust that he may be able to encourage us in that direction. He need not indicate the particular article upon which he will grant relief, but if he promises us to study new sources of revenue, that will be sufficient, and we will bide our time until the psychological moment arrives to reveal to us the great secrets of his popularity. I trust he will take this golden opportunity of making some great mark in the history of financial administration, which should leave his name in every household of the country as the record of a great Minister having the command of a great revenue and having used some portion of it for the benefit and advantage of his poorest fellow-citizens.

MR. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham): I beg to ask the right honourable Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can give any information on certain points? The Resolution which alludes to the imposition of a duty on stamps states that that duty will be imposed on a date to be fixed by Parliament. I re-

Mr. Broadhurst.

serve any remarks which I have to make on the increase of the duties of these wines until the Second Reading of the Bill, but the Resolution raising the duty on the capital of companies does not give any indication as to when that will come in force, whether on a date to be fixed by Parliament or now. I wish to know if the Chancellor of the Exchequer can give us any information on the subject.

***THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER:** Perhaps I had better answer that question at once, as it is an important one. The Resolution with regard to the wine duties comes into force at once, and I understand the Resolution as regards the increase of the duty on the capital of companies would also come into force at once. And for this reason, that if Parliament should not think fit to pass them into law it would be perfectly possible for the money erroneously paid under them to be returned to those who paid it. But the other stamp duties to which reference has been made cannot come into force until the Act including them passes, because the money paid on stamps or deeds practically cannot be returned, if erroneously levied. Therefore, a day will be fixed for these, and, as at present advised, I am inclined to fix the 1st August.

***MR. PURVIS (Petersborough):** I wish to give my reason why I think that this is a time when, in order to meet growing expenditure, we ought to reduce the Sinking Fund. The greater part of the public creditors are British, and when the taxpayers and the creditors are both members of the same community, it is no loss to pay the interest of the National Debt, however great it may be. It is a mere transfer, so far as the nation is concerned, from one hand to the other; the same as if a man took a half-crown out of one pocket and put it into the other. I say that this is not the time when it is expedient to set money free in the market, because it will not be so productive as it should be. When money is set free by the reduction of the National Debt, at a period when the country is rich and prosperous, it will emigrate in order to get a better return, or, if it stays at home, it is apt to be

thrown away in rash speculation. It is unlucky for 13 to sit down to dinner when there is only room for 12, and in the same way I suggest that this is not the time to introduce more capital into the market when there is not room enough for what already exists there. How is it possible to secure more room for circulating capital, and to make it more expedient at some future time to reduce the Debt? Simply by securing new markets in unknown regions hitherto inaccessible. This is the precise policy which the Government have been following in Africa and in Asia. It has, of course, led to a greater expenditure on the Army and Navy. It is not a question, however, how much the Government have expended; the point is, have they spent their money economically? Their policy alone can augment our business without bringing down profits so low as to stop accumulation or drive capital abroad or into rash speculation, which is the tendency of reducing National Debt and thereby putting circulating capital in the market before it is wanted. The expenses of administration in a rich and prosperous country like this do not grow in proportion to the wealth of the population, and therefore the burden of the National Debt is felt less and less from year to year. These are points which, elementary as they are, I have thought it well to lay before the House. There has been a flowing tide of expenditure on the Army and Navy, by reason of international competition, and the burden has become so serious that it has led to the idea of a Peace Conference. But to be afraid of the increase of our expenditure from the point at which Mr. Bright put it 25 years ago—i.e., from something like £80,000,000 sterling to £112,000,000, at which it stands to-day—is mere superstition, and to act upon that fear is to stand still in this matter—it would indeed be to go back. If we were to stand still in this matter of expenditure we should have to stand aside and allow some other nation to take our place and reap the fruits of our Empire. Then the grass would grow in the streets of our great cities, and the golden age of pastoral simplicity, for which my honourable Friend the Member for Northampton sighs, will have arrived.

But until that time comes we must make up our minds to bear the burden, as well as to enjoy the prosperity, of our Empire and try to make the best of it.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I have been anxious to say something upon this Budget, and I will do so briefly now, rather than postpone it to a later occasion. I do not think it will be denied that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has had a difficult task in squaring accounts in consequence of our vast expenditure. I do not think it is fair to criticise too severely the spending departments, because I feel that the increase of expenditure is very largely the outcome of circumstances over which nobody had very much control. I do not think that the enormous increase of expenditure on the Army can be attributed to any special individual. I would, however, make one observation upon one branch of expenditure which has been very freely criticised on the other side of the House. It is a class of expenditure which I undoubtedly supported, and which I think is justified on very strong grounds—I mean the expenditure incurred under the Agricultural Rating Act. I supported that Act on these grounds: that the Finance Act introduced by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire in 1894 disturbed the relations between taxation upon real and personal property, largely to the disadvantage of real property, and, holding as I do, it is a maxim which may be supported everywhere, that all classes of property—be it real or be it personal—should be taxed in the same proportion, I accepted and voted for the Agricultural Rating Act, because I understood it to be an effort on the part of the present Government to compensate real property for the disturbance in its relations with personal property which was caused by the late Government. The Finance Act of 1894 was, I considered, just in principle, but many of us could not vote for it because we could get no word of sympathy from the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire, who, we felt, was placing a burden upon real property which amounted to a much heavier proportion of taxation than was imposed upon any other form of property. That is the view I have always taken of the

Agricultural Rating Act. There is, however, one proposal in the Budget upon which I feel I must pass a short criticism, and that is the right honourable Gentleman's intention to take £2,000,000 from the Sinking Fund for the purposes of the ordinary expenditure of the year. I frankly say I regret the decision at which he has arrived. It seems to me to be a very unwise decision. If we could rely upon an era of perpetual peace it might then be justified, but it is not justified when we know that we may, unfortunately, be launched into some great war, when, of course, our great sources of revenue would necessarily shrink, and the purchasing power of the people would necessarily be less, and when we should reap to an enormous degree the advantage of having a largely reduced Debt. My honourable Friend who preceded me suggested what I have seen in the Press, but what I have not before heard in this House—namely, that it might be a good thing for the country to have a large, rather than a small, Debt.

*MR. PURVIS: I did not mean to say that. I meant to suggest that this is the better time to reduce the Sinking Fund.

COMMANDER BETHELL: I am afraid that no amount of argument can persuade me that the country is better off with a heavy Debt. Even with the disadvantage of Consols being at a very high price, it seems to me the balance of advantage is in favour of continuing the process of paying them off. Supposing in the course of the next 22 years we were to continue to pay off in that manner about £150,000,000 of our Debt it would lessen the interest by at least £20,000,000, and it is well worth consideration whether it would not be a great advantage to have such a contracted Debt. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer could have seen his way to augment the present taxation, or, for the purposes of revenue, to have broadened the basis of taxation, I should have been very glad. Of course the question of paying off Consols when they stand at so high a price is one upon which there may be a great deal of argument, especially when it is so convenient to make use of this excuse for not paying them off; but, in spite of that, I

think the advantage to be gained by making a present sacrifice is so enormous that, in my judgment, there is no doubt whatever as to the course which ought to have been pursued. After all, we have been passing through a very prosperous period. For the last 15 years, with only two or three exceptions, the country has been extremely prosperous. We have in that time paid off a great deal of debt, and I believe that while we continue prosperous we should continue to reduce it, although I quite admit that, if our revenue should fall, and if we should have to pass through a bad time, it might then become a question whether we might not properly reduce the amount of money set aside for the reduction of the Debt. Without making any further observations on the financial arrangements for the year, or without troubling the House on another occasion, I am glad to have had this opportunity of stating as clearly as I can that, in my judgment, it is unfortunate that the Government have adopted the plan they have for meeting the increased expenditure of the year. I should have supported them with much greater pleasure had they seen their way to obtain the sums required by some augmentation of existing taxation.

*MR. J. SAMUEL (Stockton): We are very much indebted to the honourable Member who has just spoken for the very candid expression of opinion he has given as to his reasons for supporting the Agricultural Rating Act of 1896. We have always been told that that Act was introduced because of the unfair incidence of rating upon agricultural land. Now we are told that the reason why the Bill was brought in and the Measure passed into law was the unfair incidence of taxation as between real and personal property, the disproportion having been brought about by the Finance Act of 1894.

COMMANDER BETHELL: That is what was in my mind.

*MR. J. SAMUEL: I think the honourable Member is following what Lord Londonderry said in the country as to the actual reason why the Government brought in the Agricultural Rating Act. And, if that is so, I hold that it is a very unfair arrangement, and for this

reason. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us more than once that the total amount received from agricultural land due to the change in the law under the Act of 1894 was only £800,000. If that is so, we have handed back to the landlords of this country and of Scotland no less a sum than £1,800,000 in lieu of the amount they have paid to the Exchequer.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): In Scotland the relief is to occupiers only.

*MR. J. SAMUEL: Yes, and we know that when the Bill was passed it was contended that the occupiers in England would get the benefit, but we are also aware that when a man applied for a farm one of the chief points taken into consideration in fixing the rent is the amount of rates to be paid. I only made this statement because of the observation of the honourable Member for the Holderness Division that the Bill was introduced because of the alteration in the incidence of taxation in 1894, and I say that we are very much indebted to him for the statement, because the country will now be able to appreciate the fact that this grant under the Agricultural Rating Act was, after all, a grant made to the landlords of the United Kingdom. But I really rose in order to reply to some observations made by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet. Those of us who come from the North of England know that the right honourable Gentleman is always calling attention to the grants-in-aid, and especially to those which are given to technical education. I think he told us that these grants-in-aid ought to be taken by the Committee into its very serious consideration, because those of us who have some experience as to how the money is expended by county councils, and even by borough councils, are aware that there is a great deal of extravagance, and certainly the House will some day have to take this matter into consideration. The larger sums expended are those given under the Act of 1888 to local authorities, who are spending the money in a most extravagant way; and I would suggest that this might be saved to the taxpayers, who might thereby be afforded very considerable

relief in taxation. The right honourable Gentleman went on to say that the working men of this country did not pay any taxation. I think that that is a statement that would be made by no man who has had any experience of the large amount of indirect taxation paid by the working classes, by the consumers of tea, tobacco, and drink. If you take, for instance, the tea duty, you will find that the working classes are very large consumers, and that where they pay 1s. per lb. for tea no less than 4d. per lb. goes into the Exchequer. Then we know that they are large consumers of tobacco, and some of them, unfortunately, of drink as well, and consequently they do pay a large proportion of the indirect taxation received by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet went on to say that the reason there is not the interest there should be in the reduction of taxation, and in economical expenditure, is that the electorate at the present time is much too wide, and that the House is elected by the working classes of the country. He also said that those who chose the tune did not pay the piper. But I would venture to point out that the working men representatives in this House and the working classes throughout the country are not the people who have demanded a great increase of expenditure upon the Navy and the Army. That demand has been made by the upper and middle classes, and, that being so, I would urge that it should be met by the direct taxpayers, and that it should not fall upon indirect taxation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer suggested to-day that he had some very extravagant colleagues sitting around him. I would like to ask him whether he has received any demand from the working classes of this country for any increase in the Army and Navy which has necessitated this additional expenditure. I think it is only fair, when the charge is made that those who choose the tune do not pay the piper, to say that, according to their income, they do pay a fair proportion of the taxation of the country; and certainly they are not those who make extravagant demands upon the Exchequer. They may demand increased efficiency in the administration of the Civil Departments, but that is a very small matter in

comparison with the millions which this Government have given to the landed interest and to the Army and Navy as well. I think it is only right that someone should enter this protest against the statement made by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet. Many honourable Members on this side of the House do, in common with myself, regret that the Government have not seen their way to meet the expenditure by increased taxation, instead of by reducing the Sinking Fund. If they were to place these taxes upon the people who have demanded the increased expenditure upon the Army and Navy, I venture to say that, in a very short time, these demands would cease, and we should have a lower rate of expenditure. I must confess I think there is great need for economy on both sides of the House.

*MR. BECKETT (York, N.R., Whitby): I am glad to hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that there would be no fresh taxation. That, of course, is a great boon, but a boon which has been purchased at too great a cost. There is no doubt about it, that the central feature of the Budget around which everything turns is the redemption of the Sinking Fund, and the question which the country will ask is, whether this is desirable and necessary. If it be shown to be necessary, it is useless to argue whether it is desirable or not. I do not think the Chancellor of the Exchequer will contend that it was necessary if the money he wanted could be raised from any other source; and there are unquestionably other sources that could be tapped. The right honourable Gentleman has drawn us a picture which shows that we are practically rolling in wealth. The people are perfectly conscious of their own prosperity, and I think they would have borne the imposition of fresh burdens with equanimity. There is reason to believe that the people are perfectly well satisfied with our expenditure on armaments. In this respect parsimony is no longer possible, and they look to efficiency rather than economy. Above all things, they regard it as a paramount duty of the Ministers of the Crown to make effective provision for our military and naval necessities, and they are, to use the expression made by

the Chancellor of the Exchequer, perfectly ready to stand being taxed, but not being teased. And now as to the question whether this redemption in the Sinking Fund is desirable, if it is not necessary. The Chancellor of the Exchequer treated this question with a considerable amount of ingenuity. He was supported by certain of my honourable Friends, who said that the National Debt was an excellent thing in itself. No doubt the National Debt is an advantage to business men in the way of investment, and still more as a security. But at the same time, if you extend your purview beyond the City, and embrace a rather wider horizon, I do not think anybody can contend that the general condition of the people is made more prosperous by having to meet an annual charge of 23 millions. Now, what are the arguments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the redemption of the Debt. In the first place, he anticipates the windfall of 1902 because some future Chancellor of the Exchequer may use it for the remission of taxation. The honourable Member for King's Lynn has pointed out that it is rather a strange thing to protect the financial virtue of your successors by sacrificing your own. I do not think that this is an argument which even convinces the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself. Then the next reason that he gives is this. He says that we must redeem so much of the stock because we are raising the price against ourselves. I rather question the assertion that by redeeming seven millions a year we are raising the price very considerably. If anybody looks at securities they will find that they have gone up all round, and Consols have gone up more than any other. They serve the purpose of business better than any other stock can serve them, therefore a great demand is made upon that particular stock. The price of gilt-edged securities has gone up all round, and as Consols are the most gilt-edged of all securities, they have naturally gone up more than any other. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer proves rather too much, because if it is an unsound financial policy to pay off Debt when you are dealing with seven millions, surely it must be unsound to pay it off when you are dealing with five or six millions. My right honourable Friend the First

Lord of the Treasury said that we might as well chuck eight hundred thousand pounds annually into the sea.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I said that it was chucking it into the sea.

***MR. BECKETT:** In that case, if we reduce the amount of the reduction from seven to five millions, we shall still be chucking the money into the sea. That argument, in order to have its full force, ought to operate in the direction of our not paying off Debt at all until 1923. What is the Sinking Fund? It was intended, in its origin, to reduce our Debt by four or five millions a year? But the object also was to reduce the Debt at an accelerated rate. That was present to the mind of Sir Stafford Northcote, who wished to see the Debt reduced first by five millions, then by 10, and then by 15 millions. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has said that he has made this reduction in order to protect the Sinking Fund, but it seems to me a rather strange way of showing a tender affection for the Sinking Fund to lay violent hands upon it. The First Lord of the Admiralty was the first Minister who violated the integrity of the Sinking Fund, and I am sorry that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not been bold enough to resist the temptation of following in his footsteps. I cannot see the force of the contention that we are paying off Debt too fast. I do not think that we can pay off Debt too fast. The public Debt of the country is 635 millions, which is a very considerable sum, and if it is a fact that this country has grown in prosperity in an absolutely unprecedented manner, yet that, in spite of this we have only reduced the Debt of the country by about one quarter since the end of Napoleon's wars, I must say that I am sorry that anything has been done to retard the rate of reduction; and in view of our increased expenditure, which is still increasing, it is all the more reason why there is a strong obligation upon us to reduce our liabilities to as great an extent as possible, especially as we are extending our liabilities in another direction. One honourable Member has referred to our local indebtedness, and complains that we are borrowing at a tremendous rate. Our local debts are going up by leaps

and bounds, and as regards the citizen, it matters not to him whether he pays his money in rates or taxes, for the burden of the debt is precisely the same, whether due to the Crown or to the municipality. The figures of our local indebtedness are somewhat remarkable, although I admit that some of it is due to remunerative forms of expenditure. In 1870, which is the first year for which the figures are available, our local indebtedness was 38 millions, but now it is 298 millions.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Do those figures include the debt for the whole of the kingdom? They do not correspond with my figures, which are for the United Kingdom.

SIR H. FOWLER: I think they are the figures for England and Wales.

*MR. BECKETT: Then that makes the force of my argument all the more significant. Our indebtedness has increased, and the rateable value has not increased in the same proportion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to the fact, which everybody recognises, that the Sinking Fund is undoubtedly our war chest, and he also alluded to the fact that our armaments, upon which we have spent so much money, have been the main factor in maintaining peace. People are willing to spend large sums of money upon armaments, because they recognise that they are creating a great reserve in the Sinking Fund. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has strongly impressed upon the country that if we went to war we could raise 200 millions without extra taxation. But by this reduction now proposed by the right honourable Gentleman he is practically depleting the war chest of the country to the extent of 80 millions at one stroke, and I must say that in view of the disturbed state of Europe, and seeing that we have been on the verge of war more than once within the last two or three years, I cannot help thinking that this reduction is a very serious matter. If you look closely into it, I think you will find that the cause of this deficit was the reduction of the tobacco duty last year, for if the duty had been kept at the old figure, the deficit would have been £1,900,000 instead of £2,900,000. If the deficit had

been a million less, I do not think that any raid would have been made upon the Sinking Fund. The Chancellor of the Exchequer does not hold out a very promising prospect for the future. I had hoped that the right honourable Gentleman—and I have the greatest possible belief in him, as the best of all Chancellors of the Exchequer—would have brought in the best of all possible Budgets, and would have shown sufficient courage to find new and productive sources of revenue, which he has predicted will have to be found in future years. He warns us of the danger of departing from the old-established system. I will not detain the Committee much longer, but I desire honourable Members to look at the old-established system which has been in operation since the year 1862, when we practically re-arranged and re-organised the whole of our financial system. In 1862, we derived from Customs 24 millions, whereas now it is only 21 millions. From Excise the total is 17 millions, as against 29 millions at present. For stamps the total was nine millions in 1862, but it is only eight millions now. In 1862, we derived from the income tax £10,800,000, but now the total is £18,000,000, and there are also now 15 millions from death duties as well. Now, the loss on the Customs represents a remission of taxation which is a gain entirely to the working classes of this country, for this remission consists principally of the abolition of the 1s. duty on corn, and the abolition of the sugar duties. The increase of the Excise illustrates the growing prosperity of the country, for it increases with the increased spending power of the people. As regards the income tax, a penny in 1862 produced £1,700,000, but now, in spite of added exemptions, it produces two and a half millions. There is also this significant fact, that in 1862, when the population was 30 millions, they paid in taxes on food to the amount of 14 millions sterling, while now the population pay in similar taxation only four and a half millions in pursuance of an extremely wise policy, which has been a great boon to the people. Now, I just want to point out this fact, that 30 millions of people paid nearly 14 millions in taxes on food without suffering any great hardship; now 40 millions of people only pay four and a half millions

of taxation on food, so that it seems to me that if we are driven into a corner it would be possible to reimpose the shilling corn duty and the sugar duty without seriously injuring the working classes of this country. In 1862, we spent in food and drink £39,600,000, and now 40 millions of people spend only 43 millions in food and drink. As regards the duty on drink and tobacco, it is in no sense a burden on the people, and it is raised easily. Drink and tobacco are luxuries chiefly indulged in by males, although the other sex indulge in them to a certain extent; but they are essentially male luxuries which ought to be provided for out of the surplus income which remains after a man has found the money which is necessary for the maintenance of his home. Nobody would suggest a reduction in the price of intoxicating liquors, and I am surprised that there has been any reduction of the revenue from tobacco. It is contended by many that an increased consumption of tobacco would be no advantage to the population, and when you see small boys going about smoking cigarettes, I think it will be admitted that cheap tobacco has its evils, and that the tax on tobacco might be raised without injuring the citizens either morally, physically, or intellectually. It is true that man does not live by bread alone, and tobacco and wine certainly add pleasure to life, but, at the same time, a man may do without these things and will be none the worse, and these should certainly form articles of taxation to be resorted to whenever the Chancellor of the Exchequer is driven into a corner, for taxation on articles of food is always, to some extent, mischievous. With regard to taxation on property, there is no doubt that every contribution levied on property is felt by all classes, whether it is direct taxation on the profits of business men or the earnings of professional men. In 1862, the taxation on property produced 20 millions, and now it produces 43½ millions, and that shows that the shifting of the burden has been very considerable; and I very much question whether you can add to the burdens on property with advantage. You cannot tap this source continually without producing rather serious results. If you carry this tax on property too far, you will kill enterprise and curtail expenditure, with the ultimate result of a re-

duction of the wages for labour. We see now a prosperous country in Europe weighed down by taxation which is killing all enterprise. I allude to Italy, where business is now being mainly carried on by foreign capital. The mere fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not thought it advisable to add a penny to the income tax—and he certainly cannot increase the death duties—shows that this class of revenue cannot be drawn further upon. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has, to a certain extent, again laid his hand upon the throat of property, because in the long run the extra wine duty and stamp duty falls upon property, and will have to be paid by the same class who pay the death duties and the income tax. This shows, I think, that the right honourable Gentleman has, to some extent, been infected by the democratic ideas of his predecessor the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I confess it is a disappointment to me to see that he has been led aside from the path I hoped a Conservative Chancellor would have followed. But I must say that, however much the death duties were disliked, they achieved their purpose, which I very much doubt whether the duty on wine will do. Why, when the right honourable Gentleman decided that alcoholic wines should pay an increased duty, did he not also turn his attention to the alcohol in beer? The alcohol in beer pays a lower rate than the alcohol in spirits; therefore, why was not some proposition made to increase the duty on beer. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has favoured the brewers, and this House is too much under the domination of the brewing trade. The contribution of this trade to the revenue is totally inadequate when you bear in mind the figures. From an official list, I find that at the beginning of 1898 the brewery and distillery companies represented 139 millions of capital. There is no means of ascertaining the present market value of all this, but I find quoted in the official list of the Stock Exchange 94 millions of it, and the market price of this 94 millions is 124 millions, so that there is practically a premium of 30 millions, or about 32 per cent. premium, upon these breweries. It seems to me that in the face of this large premium he might very well lay his finger upon brewery

companies whenever he wants to raise extra revenue.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about banks?

*MR. BECKETT: The premium on banking shares has not risen in the same way. At all events the banks render a service to the community that we cannot very well dispense with, and I do not see that taking care of the money of the community is on the same footing as pouring beer down their throats. It seems to me that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had reimposed the tobacco duty, and put a small extra duty on beer, he would have got all he wanted, and would have done nothing to seriously interfere with the trade and commerce of the country or the happiness of the people.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I congratulate the right honourable Gentleman opposite upon the very sound and sensible speech he has made. I think if the honourable Gentleman continues to realise what mistakes the present Government are making, he will in time expand into a Liberal and come on to our side. The honourable Gentleman went on to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer why he did not tax the brewers. Surely, as a Member of the Conservative Party, he must be aware why the Chancellor of the Exchequer does not tax the brewers. It was mainly through the brewers that honourable Gentlemen opposite won their elections and came into office. During those elections, almost in every public-house, the brewer provided the money to make it a Conservative election agency, and it could hardly be expected that, however much the Chancellor of the Exchequer might consider that the brewers ought to be taxed more than they are, as a member of the Conservative Party, he dare not tax them any more. My only surprise is that he does not give them a dole as he did the other classes who were good enough to aid in putting him in power. The honourable Gentleman made some sensible observations about the raid which is being made upon the Sinking Fund. The honourable Gentleman is a banker, and understands what the Sinking Fund is. I confess that I was utterly surprised when

I heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer make his speech that he did not seem to understand what the meaning of a Sinking Fund was. The right honourable Gentleman commenced his speech by saying that if there was one thing he would not touch, it was the Sinking Fund. When I heard that statement, I turned round to my right honourable Friend near me, and said: "I know his ways, and I think you will see before his speech is over that he will go for that Sinking Fund." A sinking fund means that you put a certain sum of money aside for the gradual extinction of the National Debt. In the nature of things, the amount of interest goes down with the amount by which you diminish the Debt and the Sinking Fund goes up, and surely every person who has considered that we have allotted a fixed sum per annum for the extinction of the Debt knows perfectly well that it must go up every year. The real fact is this—the right honourable Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had a very difficult task. I have no doubt that he has done his best to preach economy, and I have no doubt, if it had not been for the right honourable Gentleman, there would have been a far greater expenditure; but he had to yield to his colleagues, and he did not dare, although he might think that the consumers paid too little at present, to levy a higher tax upon them; so he had recourse to the Sinking Fund, and it is always an easy matter to "rob Peter to pay Paul." But I was, I confess, astonished at his speech. I was still more astonished by the speech delivered yesterday by the First Lord of the Treasury at an association called the Primrose League, a body which, I understand, is in some way connected with the Conservative Party. The right honourable Gentleman appeared there as the great high priest of the Conservative Party, and delivered an astonishing speech on current politics.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Were you there?

MR. LABOUCHERE: No, I was not; but I have so much admiration for his speeches that if I could have got a ticket I should have gone to listen to the right honourable Gentleman, though in all probability they would not have ad-

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mitted me. But I have read the report, and he said that we are spending a large sum upon armaments; but, apart from the fact of spending them, we are threatening the world in general—no one will dare to make war on us—and in doing this we are benefiting posterity, because although there is a Debt, and they will have to pay the interest on it, the effect of spending large sums on great armaments is to make them a sort of Sinking Fund.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I did not say that.

MR. LABOUCHERE: No, the right honourable Gentleman did not say that; he clothed his meaning in better language than I can use, no doubt, but that was the idea.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I do not admit that version; that is not the correct version at all.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Then I hope the right honourable Gentleman will be more careful in future, because many other simple people like myself may be deceived as to what the right honourable Gentleman really does mean. But it is rather a curious argument, a large and ingenious paradox, and I think he excelled himself in likening great armaments to the Sinking Fund. Now, what are the other taxes? £800,000 has to be provided, and he puts up the duty on wine—he increases it. I have no particular objection myself in general to duties on intoxicating liquors; but why, may I ask, is it put upon wine rather than upon the brewing interest? I will tell the Committee why. Because the wine interest is a much smaller interest than the brewing interest. Some interest had to be offended, and it was thought better to find a small interest rather than a large one. I think it is a curious exemplification of our free trade that, having entered into a compact with France under the Cobden Treaty, that we should have raised these duties. As I have already said, the Government has got into a mess with Italy, Portugal, France, and our Colonies, and I hope they will be able to get out of it without going to war, and so placing another tax upon the country. The other duty

is a tax on Colonial securities. The right honourable Gentleman told us how we taxed the Colonies, and how we sought to draw them to us. I should have hardly have thought he would have shown his love to them by taxing them. The Government has increased taxation by £19,000,000. Of that £3,000,000 has gone in doles to the one class which he favours, £10,000,000 have gone to armaments, and I should say that I am putting it low when I say the increase of £2,000,000 of our increased expenditure is due directly to foreign annexation. In the meanwhile old-age pensions, promised at the last election, are put off, and every endeavour to better the condition of the poorer people of this country has been frustrated. There is no money for that, because of this large expenditure in armaments. If the expenditure had remained at the same as it was when this Government came into power, we should have had £10,000,000 to play with; but to the extent of those £10,000,000 we should have benefited the country. It is often said that the House and country are in favour of these great armaments. For my part, I am opposed to them, and I know that there is a town called Northampton which is also opposed to them. Nobody can complain of my opposition, because I have never lost an opportunity of complaining or dividing against the policy of the Government and the expense that is the necessary consequence of that policy. I cannot understand sensible men—because, putting aside their political opinions, they are sensible men—on the other side of the House pledging themselves to a policy which must necessarily, through its naval proposals and the increase of its armaments, terribly increase our expenditure. You have a Colonial Secretary, who told his constituents at Birmingham that we had a sacred mission from Heaven to civilise the barbarous nations of the world, and his idea of doing so is to seize upon their countries. That is one reason for these armaments. If you expand your territory you must increase your Army. If you have a greater territory to protect, what do you do? Why, at the present time you are raising a troop of Chinese, and you are raising savage regiments to fight other savages, and that is why I go to the bottom of

these things, and I not only take exception to the expenditure, but to the policy which renders it necessary. It is the same with regard to the Navy. I am not going into the whole question of the Navy. You have the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a naval financial man; the First Lord of the Admiralty, also a naval financial man. You have the First Lord of the Treasury, who understands to some extent affairs of this kind, but, I cannot understand why they go into this game of "Beggar my Neighbours" against other countries. They want to be supreme on the sea. They want to be assured that our commerce will go on in times of war the same as in times of peace, and this seems to work in with another divine revelation which the Colonial Secretary has had—that we shall never be at war with more than two powers, and we shall never be defeated because success in a naval war entirely depends upon the number of ships we have as against the number of ships they have, so that so long as we continue to build more ships than they we shall be alright. But so long as we go on building ships other nations will go on building them.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I think the honourable Gentleman is travelling rather wide of the subject matter before the Committee.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I have no doubt, Sir, that I was carried away by the strong feeling I have against increasing our armaments; I only want to say that we object to a large revenue if that large revenue is not properly spent. We want economy, and we want 20s. for every £, but we fully recognise there are many things in which the State has an obligation to its poorest citizens. We feel that we could approve of the taxation if the money was spent in a proper manner. But we complain of extravagant waste in the application of money which, if well spent, could be used to greater advantage. Do not let it be said that we Radicals should object to any taxation, and spend it on bettering the condition of the poorer classes. That is what we want to do; but what we assert is that taking this account as it is, that if you have run the expenditure up to £120,000,000 per annum, and out of that £50,000,000 is spent directly upon

armaments, about £23,000,000 to reduce the National Debt, which is caused by wars, you will not be able to raise that amount of money which we hold is necessary and desirable to expend upon the country—not on Africa, not on China, not upon the rich man to whom doles have been given, but upon the poorest classes in this country.

***MR. LOUGH (Islington, S.):** There is one thing to-day which has placed us at a disadvantage in discussing this matter, and that is, that no Resolution is upon the Paper.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER: It is has never been the rule in this House to put the Resolution upon the Paper. That is perfectly well known.

MR. LOUGH: I put the suggestion in the most respectful way. I asked many of my honourable Friends, but they could give me no information, and I do think it would conduce to a better discussion if we had a Motion on the Paper. I have not had an opportunity so far of making one or two remarks on the general scheme of the Budget. I have listened to a great many speeches, and I do not desire to take up the points which have been dealt with by those who have preceded me, but there are two or three matters which, perhaps, it is not too late to bring to the notice of the right honourable Gentleman, with regard to which I think he might modify his scheme a little. First, I would refer to the question of stamps; one observation has been made in this Debate upon that, and I will only say that I agree with what has been urged upon the right honourable Gentleman with regard to Foreign and Colonial Bond stamps. The point was not taken yesterday evening which I desire to call attention to now, which is that a great many of these bonds are sold at a great deal below their nominal value. Some, I understand, representing a face value of £100 are sold at £5, and the whole of those will have to bear £100 stamp. Many shares in American railways have never paid any dividend, and they are sold very much beneath their face value, and there is a large business being done in them. If they are stamped on their nominal value, it will be manifestly un-

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fair. I have heard no suggestion from the right honourable Gentleman as to how this class of shares shall be dealt with, and I cannot but think the right honourable Gentleman has been a little hasty in putting a stamp upon these bonds. I would be very glad if he in his reply would make some suggestion as to how he would be able to deal with that class of stock to which I refer. Something was said as to the proposed stamp on letters of allotment, and I think that also requires some reconsideration. In the Budget speech we understood the right honourable Gentleman to suggest a 6d. stamp on letters of allotment down to £1. Now it is to be modified, and we have a 1d. stamp on letters of allotment up to £5, and after that a 6d. stamp. This, again, I must strongly oppose, because in the case of allotments in small amounts a capital of £1,000 would have to pay £5, whilst an allotment of £1,000 to one person only pays 6d. I certainly think that this ought to be adjusted. It certainly exercises a great effect upon the allotment of shares to small applicants. I do not know how this proposed stamp will affect a class of enterprise which has recently sprung up in Ireland. I mean the allotment societies which have sprung up all over Ireland. Perhaps they will come under the head of the Friendly Societies Act; if not, it is a matter which I think the right honourable Gentleman ought to look into. I think it might be so arranged that the 1d. stamp should cover £100, and then after £100 we might have a 6d. stamp on letters of allotment up to £1,000 or more. There ought to be some adjustment in this matter, because the recent policy in the finance of this country has been to tax the poor lightly and place taxation upon the rich; but in this case, and another which I shall mention, this policy has been reversed. It will be more apparent when I take the next item. Take the case of the wine duties. I believe there is great feeling in the country about these wine duties, and I hope the right honourable Gentleman in his reply will give some promise that this matter shall also be reconsidered. The objection which I take to the wine duties is that it is the poorest wines—the cheapest wines—that pay the heaviest duty—the poor man's wine. The duty on wine containing 30 per cent. of alcohol is increased from 1s. to 1s. 6d.,

which is an increase of 50 per cent. in taxation. On wines containing over 30 per cent. of alcohol the duty is increased from 2s. 6d. to 3s., so that in the poor man's wine you have an increase of taxation of 50 per cent., and in the rich man's wine it is only 20 per cent. In that case also it is obvious that the principle of finance has been reversed. If it is necessary that the duty on cheap wine should be increased by 50 per cent., then I think it is also necessary that the higher quality wine should be increased in like ratio. Now, there is one complaint which I wish to make in reference to the Budget, and which I always do make, and that is that the right honourable Gentleman in his speech said nothing at all about Ireland.

MR. JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham): What about Irish whisky?

MR. LOUGH: There are several other taxes in Ireland besides the whisky tax. Ireland comes in indirectly, and it always will come in indirectly into these fiscal questions until the financial relations between the countries are dealt with fairly. How does it come in? We have heard a great deal about the whisky tax and the reduction in the tobacco duty. Generally every representative of Great Britain thinks that the tobacco tax ought to be re-imposed. What is the difficulty? This is the first one: With regard to this tax, nobody wanted it reduced because it is as low or lower than ever it was, and it is not felt by the population. That is the truth with regard to Great Britain; but when we turn to Ireland it is particularly high, and one of the most oppressive taxes ever imposed upon that country, and entirely against the principle laid down in 1860 or 1870. Years ago the tobacco duty was not more than 1s. in the lb., now it is 3s. 4d. I allude to this matter because I believed the right honourable Gentleman had a kindly feeling towards Ireland, and he thought he took an impost off an article that is much consumed in Ireland. He took it off England as well. By reducing the tobacco duties he lost a million or a million and a quarter; with half that amount he could have reduced the tobacco duty in Ireland down to 1s. in the lb., and not touched the tax in Great Britain at all. He would have satisfied

English Members who did not want the tax reduced, and given the Irish a great benefit. But that, is only a side question with regard to Ireland. The great point is the way in which Irish revenue is progressing as each year passes compared with the British revenue. It may be said that you cannot recognise the difference, but there is a difference which cannot fail to be recognised. Papers are issued every year which are in effect the Irish Budget, and the last are dated 31st March 1898, and they show that the increase in the British revenue is almost without precedent; they show an increase so far as England is concerned of £3,061,000; but so far as Ireland is concerned there is a decrease of £30,000 in the revenue. That is an incident of such gravity that every Chancellor of the Exchequer who makes a Budget speech in this House should give us some information about it. The Irish revenue has commenced to decline, which is the most tragic circumstance which could occur, and the population is steadily diminishing; whilst the revenue in Great Britain is steadily increasing. How will the new tax suit Ireland? There is £450,000 to be levied, some of it out of wine and some out of stamps. I am sorry the Irish benches have been so empty during this discussion. It is a very interesting question. We can answer the question at once. The new taxes will not suit Ireland at all, because everything shows that it is poverty that is increasing there instead of the wealth that is increasing so rapidly here. It may be said that these duties will not press heavily on Ireland. They will not press so hardly upon Ireland as many other taxes would, but Ireland wants relief from taxation, and the £40,000 to be levied on these two articles will be a burden greatly felt by that unhappy people.

On the return of the CHAIRMAN after the usual interval—

*MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): The proposal to increase the duty on light wines is, in my view, an unwise proposal, and one which, if it does not tell adversely in its effect on the revenue, will tell adversely on the moral welfare and sobriety of the country as a whole. I submit that the impost involves a reversal of the fiscal policy which has been pur-

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sued since 1860, under which wines have been taxed more and more lightly in the hope of encouraging the greater consumption of light wines, and a corresponding diminution in the consumption of liqueurs, spirits, and beer. That was the policy laid down by Mr. Gladstone, and, with a few exceptions, it has been followed from year to year. Now, in this respect, the present Budget does something to check that policy, and I venture to submit to the Committee that it will act adversely upon the growing custom among large numbers of people who drink light wines in preference to beers and spirits. The man who goes into a cheap restaurant and gets a 1s. bottle of claret, or an 18d. bottle of Rhine wine, will feel the effect of the duty. It is most unwise, for the sake of £400,000, to add this extra impost. It would have been much better if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had placed his additional tax upon liqueurs imported from abroad,* or upon spirits of home manufacture, than to have done something to discourage the consumption of light wines, which, compared with heavy beverages, are innocuous and more healthy for the public to consume. It is for these reasons that I protest against the imposition of the extra duty.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Reference has already been made in the course of the Debate to the speech which was delivered by the First Lord of the Treasury in the Albert Hall. But I do not think that justice has been done to that speech. It was, I venture to say, one of the most remarkable speeches that was ever made on the Financial Statement. What was the argument of the First Lord of the Treasury? He said that under the Budget proposals—in spite of the reduction proposed to be made in the Sinking Fund—there would remain a sum of £5,800,000, which would be set aside in the coming year for the reduction of the Debt. He went on to say that the £5,800,000, which is set aside for the coming year, would, for every £100 of stock cancelled, have to pay somewhere about £110 10s. Quite true. Now, mark what that means—

“The expenditure in the present year in the redemption of the Debt of this £5,800,000 will involve the expenditure of over £800,000, for which absolutely no return is obtained by anybody except the existing

holders of Consols. So far as the nation is concerned, so far as the taxpayer is concerned, so far as those who are going to provide the money are concerned, it might as well be thrown into the sea, because it serves no useful purpose whatever."

Well, Sir, this argument, if it has any value whatever, is directed, and solely directed, not to the reduction of the Sinking Fund, but to its total abolition; because it amounts to saying, that it is the duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not merely to take the £2,000,000 out of the Sinking Fund, but to abolish the Sinking Fund and spend the money upon building additional ships or reducing taxation. I have never, in the course of my political experience, heard an argument which brought the speaker to such an impotent conclusion. Well, Sir, there is in that speech the germ of a policy which I venture to say the taxpayers of this country, and those who are the inheritors of sound principles of finance, are bound to repudiate, because it indicates that in spite of the protests to which we listened the other night, the Ministers now in control of the finances of the country consider the Sinking Fund is an abuse, and that every £1 laid out in cancelling Consols, so long as they are at a premium, is so much money thrown into the sea. Now, Sir, I turn to another passage of this remarkable speech. The First Lord of the Treasury went on to say that he had been reading the correspondence between Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington in 1845, and that in the course of this correspondence the Duke of Wellington expressed the conviction that the country was in a neglected state in matters of defence, and that he could not answer for the defence of the country, or of the Colonies, in the event of an invasion by France. What was the answer of Sir Robert Peel?

"Our Debt is nearly £800,000, and though peace has existed for nearly 30 years, but little has been done to diminish the Debt."

And he went on to say that—

"Though much ought to be done with regard to defence of England and of Ireland, and though it would be desirable to do much with regard to the Colonies, practically the condition of the finances was absolutely prohibitive of any complete scheme of the kind desired by the Duke of Wellington, and in that impossibility the Duke of Wellington concurred."

But what is the extraordinary lesson the First Lord of the Treasury draws from that remarkable and most instructive correspondence? He says, that since that day the wealth of this country has vastly increased, so vastly increased, indeed, that the immense burden of taxation the people of England are now called upon to bear can be borne much more lightly than that which had to be borne by your forefathers in 1845. Yes, Sir, but if Sir Robert Peel and the Ministers of those days had listened to military alarmists, and had consented to pile up the expenditure, would the country be as prosperous as it is to-day? I say that the lesson which the First Lord of the Treasury deduces from that correspondence was the very reverse to that which he ought to have deduced; because, if so great an authority warned him that the country could not afford to bear the immense burden of taxation, I think he ought to have recognised that his first duty was to put the finances of the country on a solid footing. Sir, the extraordinary position which England occupies, as compared with other countries in point of credit and financial resource, is due to men like Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Gladstone, and other Ministers who had the courage to set military and naval alarmists at defiance, and who practised those doctrines of economy of which Ministers now make mockery. The First Lord of the Treasury spoke of the few survivors of the despised Manchester School. Well, of some of the doctrines of the Manchester School I certainly am no admirer; but if he means the men who preach economy in this House, then I say that that remark was most undeserved. Sir, I think that the real moral to be deduced from the speech of the right honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer is this, that the Ministry foresee deficits in the years to come, and that they are resolved to direct the attention of the public to the Sinking Fund as a means by which these deficits are to be provided for, and thus avoid the unpopularity of fresh taxation. I noticed in the same speech that the First Lord of the Treasury had described the great disappointment of the Members on this side of the House because fresh taxation had not been imposed, that they were disappointed in not being able to make the popular capital which they expected

out of the Budget. It is the resource of a very weak Minister when he has the general consent to a great increase in the military expenditure. I have always been one of the minority on this side of the House, who have consistently opposed every great increase of expenditure, particularly naval and military expenditure. On several occasions I have expressed my opinion that those who supported these great increases will be called upon by the irresistible logic of facts to support also in the Committee of Ways and Means the necessary Measures to provide for these increases. I do hold that all solid, honest, and safe finance is based above all other things on this principle, that you must bring home to the taxpayers their responsibility, if they vote for increased expenditure, by instantly providing for that increased expenditure by taxation. If by any device, by borrowing, for instance, you can postpone to a future day the meeting of the bill, you are less likely to take into serious consideration the possibility of reducing outlay. And therefore I say it is an unsound and almost a dishonest policy to pile up an enormous increased expenditure and not propose to bring home to the taxpayers a sense of their responsibility by increased taxation. One remarkable thing I have noticed is this, that this year, when there was a deficit, the Chancellor of the Exchequer suddenly discovered that it was a very improper thing to reduce the Debt to the extent we were doing, but we did not discover that last year. If it was an improvident and wasteful thing to leave the provision for the reduction of the Debt at £25,000,000 last year, and the year before, why was it that he was not converted to the improvident view until the necessity arose to provide for fresh expenditure? If I raise that point, it is because I hold that in a time of great and exceptional prosperity, the continuance of which it is impossible to calculate—if the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been really brought to the conviction that the provisions for the extinction of the Debt were excessive, the proper use to make of any sums taken from the annual provision for the Debt ought to be to employ it in relieving taxation. I heard an honourable Member say that that would be a very dangerous thing for the money market.

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I do not know whether he really understands the operations of the money market when he talked in that way. The sound principle is that if you cannot lay aside a reserve fund wisely and judiciously in the shape of repayment of debt, then your proper and defensive policy is to leave the money in the pockets of the ratepayers, and secure a reserve in other ways by reducing the taxes. I say, that even if we were to admit, as I do not admit, the validity of the argument, that the annual provision for the Debt has become excessive—I say that the only proper use to put the two or three millions thus left free from the extinction of debt is to make use of it for the remission of taxation. We know that even assuming nothing occurs in Africa or China, or in various other regions where disturbances are likely to arise, to increase the demands of the various Departments, the automatic expenditure will increase as regards not only the Army and Navy, but in connection with education and two or three other Votes. That is admitted, and we know from statements made before the Committee of Supply that the revenue is very likely to have passed the high water-mark of prosperity, and that a solid decrease may set in next year or the year after, when large deficits will arise. How are these deficits going to be provided for? Are they to be provided for by fresh taxation? And if not, then I say that the argument now being used will be made the basis for a fresh inroad on the Sinking Fund. Sir, I also think that the danger of the public consenting to the further increase in the perpetual demands of the Navy and Army will be considerably enhanced by the fact that they have not been made to pay this year, as was the case in the last two or three years, when the Estimates were enormously exceeded, and at the end of the year there were realised surpluses of two, three, or four millions which met the increased charges without increased taxation. The public mind was thus not directed to the mad career of increased expenditure during the last four years, when 19 millions were permanently added to the expenditure of the country. That is a condition of things without parallel in the history of England. But if the public had been this year compelled to submit to a sharp increase of

taxation, to the extent of two or three millions, then they would have taken the whole situation into very serious consideration, and the means would have been found to put a stop to this enormous increased expenditure. There is one aspect of this particular subject in which I am particularly interested. I myself, as an Irishman, have watched for the last two or three years with gathering indignation, the reckless way in which the millions of surplus were disposed of without any reference, or at any rate, with little reference, to the claims which the Irish people have put forward to some readjustment of the financial grievance under which they suffer. It is a great aggravation of that grievance that this country has not been able to plead any difficulty or want of funds as an excuse for meeting our just demands. On the contrary, the funds have been abundant, and a very small proportion indeed of the money added to the naval and military expenditure of the country would have been sufficient to remove the financial grievance from which the Irish people are suffering. In this connection I desire to say that I will not join in the condemnation levelled against the right honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his action in reducing the tobacco duty last year. That remission and the imposition of the death duties in 1894 were the only acts of justice which have been done to Ireland within my memory on questions of pure finance. The death duties were just towards Ireland, because they threw additional burden on the community in such a way as to inflict no fresh injustice to Ireland. And, therefore, I recognise that as a great democratic reform in which the just claims of Ireland were acknowledged. As regards the Budget of last year, I say it was a just Budget, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer, having a million and a quarter which he was prepared to use in the remission of taxation, devoted it to the remission of a tax which, more than any other tax, presses on Ireland unjustly. And, therefore, I admire to-day the courage of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in standing by that remission, in spite of the pressure put upon him to give some remission on taxation on real property. In that respect he did that which was right and just both as regards Ireland and the

people of this country. I cannot share the view that the remission of the duty on tobacco is not so advantageous as a remission of the tea duty would be. I venture to say that if you polled the men of the country—I cannot say as to the women—it would be found that they would insist that tobacco is almost a universal necessity of life, at all events, according to the customs of the people at the present day. I therefore think the remission of the tobacco duty is a capital remission, but it went only a very small way to re-distribute the financial balance in Ireland. It is a monstrous thing that the whole of these Budget additions made to the expenditure of the Empire are required for the protection and the expansion of the trade in England. An honourable Member said a few minutes ago that this was a pure business transaction, that the Government was spending these £19,000,000 more than four years ago for the purpose of expanding British trade in large parts of the earth's surface; that the expenditure would create markets for which we would get a full recompense for all the money laid out. But, Sir, not a farthing of that will come to us in Ireland. We have no trade with these regions, and are not likely to have any. So far as the Fleet of the Empire is concerned, and the new trade which is to be created for the benefit of the Empire, Ireland shares in none of the advantages. And yet we are made to pay a large share of the cost. Our voice is not sufficiently weighty in this House to support the view which we take—a view commonly denounced as that of Little Englanders, because the Irish representatives are entirely opposed to this policy of extension, and the grabbing of new regions all over the world. I wish to say a few words on another aspect of the question. We are called upon to provide the means for this fresh expenditure by increasing the taxation on wines. I have not the least doubt that this will cause a great exasperation in certain foreign nations. I venture to say that for every pound levied by the new wine taxes possibly £100 will be spent on ships and armaments caused by the irritation in France and other countries. These taxes will also cause serious embarrassments with the Colonies. I have listened in this House frequently to the most enthusi-

astic speeches as to the policy of knitting together the various parts of the Empire, and the enormous advantage that would follow from that course. I am not a believer myself in that dream. I have travelled throughout most of the British Colonies, and I believe that the British Colonies are very fond of the Mother Country so long as the Mother Country gives them all the money that they want. I have not the slightest doubt that the time will come when these Colonies will set up for themselves, as America did, when they are sufficiently wealthy and sufficiently strong to do so. That is a view, I admit, which is not shared by many men in this House, and which is not the fashion at the present day. But could there be imagined a measure more calculated to irritate the Colonies, and for a very small advantage, than to put a tax on the wines produced by them? I know that in Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia the greatest possible pride is taken in the wine industry, and that they look forward to developing it to an enormous extent. I must say from personal experience that their wines are most excellent, and I think that they are capable of being made as good as the wines of Germany and France. And yet, for the sake of the few pounds which will arise from the proceeds of this tax, all these advantages have to be cast aside, and we are asked to consent to a measure which will undoubtedly check the wine industry in the Colonies, than which nothing can be more calculated to irritate the colonists themselves. I have held all along, and I still hold, the view that all the talk we have listened to about the necessity of this enormous increased expenditure for the defence of the Empire, and which has caused these new taxes, is to a large extent entirely untrue. I hold and believe that this condition of things has arisen from the policy of the Government. Although it may be quite true that England is bound in her own interest to keep pace to a certain extent with any two other Powers, so far as the fleets are concerned, we heard that doctrine enormously enlarged upon. The First Lord of the Admiralty distinctly stated that in drawing up his Naval Programme he had under his consideration six naval Powers, including the United States of America. And so, once you

allow these claims an undue voice in the politics of the country, their appetite increases and grows on what it feeds. You cannot satisfy the Army and the Navy. If you spend millions on them, they want more millions next year. As long as you encourage them, I do not blame them. Their professional spirit always finds some ground for increased expenditure, and the more you increase their power the more you increase their demand for further expenditure. I hold that it is by speeches made by Ministers, and by the attitude we have assumed towards other Powers, and by the constant talk on platforms as to the necessity of England being mistress of the seas, and capable of sweeping the seas, that have driven the other European Powers, and have caused them to make the great exertions they have made to increase their fleets, and which in return have excited this country to increased exertion in the way of increased expenditure. It is not alone the policy of the Ministry which has involved this greatly increased expenditure, but it is this enormous, and, as I consider, this enormously useless extension of our Empire in Africa, which is responsible for at least £750,000 of this additional expenditure. There is another point which has been passed over in these Debates, and which has, I think, added £150,000 to the military expenditure of the country, and that is the maintenance of 17,000 troops in the self-governing Colonies in South Africa. That is a most extraordinary proceeding. As I understand it, in listening to the Debates in this House, the maintaining of a corps of 17,000 in South Africa will require at least 30,000 men in this country to maintain these 17,000 men in South Africa, and 30,000 men in this country will account for an expenditure of £2,000,000 a year. It is the maintenance of these great garrisons abroad which compels the Government to add, year after year, to the strength of the Army at a cost of £3,000,000 per annum. I trust some other occasion will occur on which we can demand from the Government why these 17,000 men are maintained in South Africa. For these reasons I am strongly opposed to the present proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and even the First Lord of the Treasury will admit that I am among those who consistently oppose

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all increased expenditure, and am now legitimately entitled to oppose this Budget.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): Honourable Gentlemen on both sides of the House, of different political opinions, have expressed their opinions in regard to the Budget proposals, and I may be permitted to say a few words on the subject. As regards the remarks of my right honourable Friend the Member for the Isle of Thanet, that I was the only survivor of the Cobden school of politics, I am obliged to him for giving me that compliment, because I acknowledge that he is one of the most honest and fearless politicians in this House, although we differ completely in our opinions. I am proud to be called a survivor of the Cobden school, because I think this country is in the proud position that it occupies to-day by having adopted the policy of Cobden. Would you have had a £112,000,000 Budget if it had not been for Free Trade? My right honourable Friend says that I am the only survivor of the Cobden school, but I have got a new colleague lately in the shape of the Emperor of Russia; for in the missive which His Imperial Majesty recently sent to the nations, he was only carrying out the policy of Mr. Cobden. It is of that policy I wish to speak in connection with this immense Budget we are discussing to-night. I admit that it is quite correct to say that this Budget is a war Budget in the time of peace. If in the years gone by the Chancellor of the Exchequer had asked for such a Budget it would have been sufficient to carry on a great war; but we have now all the expenditure of a war without the glory of a war. It is very extraordinary to my mind that we should be called upon to meet this enormous expenditure when we consider our position. We heard in the Queen's Speech at the beginning of the Session—

“My relations with other nations continue to be friendly;”

and then the Government wants £50,000,000 for armaments in order to show the friendship of the Queen for those other nations. What is the use of being friendly with other nations if we are to have this enormous expenditure? Well, I have been in this House

so long that I remember those struggles for economy which have been referred to. I was much interested on Tuesday night in the speech of the honourable Member for East Aberdeenshire when he brought forward a very good retrenchment Motion. I knew what would happen on that Motion, because I am an old hand. I remember 37 years ago when we were beginning this wild expenditure. The young Radicals, as we were in those days, held a meeting, and the late Mr. Childers drew up a resolution. I am not sure that the Leader of the Opposition was not one of us on that occasion. He was a very good Radical in those days, and I hope he will continue to be so. But when this resolution which Mr. Childers drew up was brought forward in the House, it was bowled over directly, because Lord Palmerston, who was the most adroit and agile of all political gladiators, got up and said a vote on an abstract resolution of that kind was of no consequence; and all our friends disappeared. That was the way things were carried on in the House in those days. But to-night we must be practical, because this money has to be voted sooner or later. I allude to the circumstance to show how far we have travelled during these 37 years. Then the Budget was £70,000,000, and I remember Mr. Baxter said on that occasion that we could not go on much longer bleeding the taxpayers to the tune of £70,000,000. That shows the folly of prophesying before the event, for where are we now? We have a Budget of £112,000,000, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer very honestly and frankly says that he sees no prospect of there being any relief in the future. That being so, we go on for ever with these enormous sacrifices. Those words ought to be repeated over and over again which Mr. Disraeli used long ago when he said “that expenditure depends upon policy.” It is the policy of expansion, or Imperialism, or whatever you like to call it, which has brought us into this position. The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs has described the true Imperialist as one who believes that everything that does not belong to other nations should belong to us, but a great many people believe not only that, but also that everything that does belong to other nations should belong to us. The Under Secre-

tary does not approve of that, but that is the policy which the Government is carrying out by these enormous sums of money. The only possible justification for spending £50,000,000 on the Army and Navy would be if we required it for defence. Then I am puzzled to know against whom do we want to defend ourselves? I should like to ask any historian if he could point out to me any great war that by any stretch of language could be called defensive. I am alluding to its commencement. Of course, it may become defensive after it is started. It is not for defence you want these sums of money. If you are to go on bullying France, scrambling for Africa and partitioning China, you will require a much bigger Budget even than you have now. The Chancellor of the Exchequer explained last year that the money expended on the Army and Navy was for promoting our trade throughout the world. It would be a poor way of spending your time and money, to have these great armaments for the purpose of carrying on trade. "Our trade our policy," is what the publicans say, and people do not think better of them for it; but I think it is a very sordid way for a great nation to act. I am not going into the machinery of this Budget; it has been fully discussed tonight. I will only say that the policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is the policy of the man who said he was determined to pay all his debts, even if he had to borrow the money to do it. That is the policy of this Budget. The Government say they have got a mandate. Where did it come from? Did it come from the Heavens above or the earth below? All I have to say is that if the white man's mandate is to go carreering about the whole world in search of gain, then the white man's burden by and by will have to be much bigger than £112,000,000 a year. I do not say that the Government are doing wrong in spending this large sum of money if their policy is right. My honourable Friend the Member for Stockton said that the working men never asked for this expenditure. But have they ever protested against it? I am not going to attack the Government. They got no mandate from Heaven, but they did from the constituencies, and more blame to the constituencies. They got a mandate from the people of this

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country to create wars and shoot people all over the world. I cannot tell what the people of this country are thinking of. It seems to me they do not think much about politics at the present moment, because food and work are more abundant than ever they were in the history of this country. Because the people at this moment have plenty of food and football, they wax fat and kick. I appeal to the Government, not as politicians seeking votes more or less, but as statesmen. I ask them if they cannot now do something to relieve the heavy burdens of this Budget by adopting a wiser Foreign Policy. I will not lay stress on what Cobden said, but I will appeal to other statesmen who may have more weight with honourable and right honourable Gentleman opposite. I will appeal to Sir Robert Peel, who said that in times of peace we should try retrenchment; to Mr. Disraeli, who, in the most celebrated phrase he ever used, alluded to the "bloated armaments" kept up by this country. I would appeal also to another Conservative statesman whom we all remember well—Lord Randolph Churchill. He sacrificed one of the brightest careers any statesman ever had, because he could not stand the enormous national expenditure, and he may be said to have sacrificed his whole future on the altar of economy, a deed which I think has not had sufficient recognition from the people of this country. I mention those statesmen because I think their opinions may have weight. They were no Little Englanders, as some of us are called. Now is the opportunity for the Conservative Party to relieve the country from its enormous burden. They have an overwhelming majority in this House. They have able leaders, and there is nothing to disturb them in the country. Let them revise this Budget, which is based on a policy of rivalry and ruin, and, by placing the national finances on a peace footing, send a much needed message of peace and economy to the long-suffering nations of Europe.

Mr. ARNOLD (Halifax): The question has been discussed at great length as to the amount set apart for the purposes of the National Debt, but I would call the attention of the Committee to the fact that, although that amount is reduced by the sum of £2,000,000, there

yet remains a Sinking Fund of more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that something like £6,000,000 was quite sufficient for the reduction of the National Debt. The reduction of the National Debt at the present moment takes the form of the purchase of Consols. But as we are bound to pay off at par in 1923, I cannot see the use of paying off at a premium now. It is not done in any business I have ever heard of. We ought to discharge our liability in full when it is due, and not pay a premium of 11 per cent. in discharge of it years before. I think we could easily devise some other means of reducing the Debt than that method. Honourable Members opposite think that because we shorten taxation by £2,000,000 another £2,000,000 ought to be raised, so that we might still continue to pay this £2,000,000 off the Debt. Perhaps they ought to look at some other sources of revenue than those included in the present taxation. Almost everything we drink at the present moment, except plain water, is taxed. Water mixed with whisky pays an enormous tax, and water used for tea is also heavily taxed. But there is one class of water not taxed, which is extremely palatable, and that is aerated water, which is imported in enormous quantities. Why should it not pay something towards the revenue? The retail price of aerated waters is excessive. An enormous quantity of these agreeable beverages are drunk by the community, and cost an enormous sum of money, and I fail to see why they should not contribute something towards the revenue. A tax on aerated waters would bring in £2,000,000, but whether £2,000,000 is raised in that or in any other way I hope we shall adopt a business-like method of discharging our liabilities when they become due some 20 years hence.

*MR BARLOW (Somerset, Frome): I should not have intervened in this Debate had it not been that I have a very great objection to one proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The increase in the stamp and wine duties is undoubtedly objected to by the persons who will have to pay them, but I do not

think that is the chief blot in the proposals of the Government. The chief blot is undoubtedly the intention of the Government to tamper with the Sinking Fund. I confess I am sufficiently old-fashioned to have always regarded the Sinking Fund as a kind of guarantee fund to improve our position financially and to lay up in times of prosperity, in order to be able to draw upon in time of war and adversity. It seems to me that we are unduly increasing our expenditure both on the Army and Navy, and in various other ways. That expenditure goes on increasing with automatic regularity, and appears almost to have the permanency of a law of Nature. But I contend that we are laying up a valuable reserve force if we decrease the amount we owe under the National Debt. One financial paper I see capitalises the amount which the Government reduce the Sinking Fund by, and makes it £66,000,000 sterling, therefore to that extent you are lessening your power to grapple with adverse times in the future. It is true that we are building ships and fortifying places, but it is no less true that guns and fortifications require money, not merely for their construction, but also for their maintenance. It is no less true that the country has in the long run to find the money, and the more you trench upon your resources in times of peace and prosperity the less able will you be to draw upon the country in time of war and adversity. Therefore I say that I have never seen a more prodigal act than the act of the Government in a time of unexampled prosperity, when the revenue has increased beyond the most sanguine hopes of Chancellors of the Exchequer on one side or the other, to ignore that increase, and reduce our Sinking Fund, which must be the great security we must avail ourselves of in times of adversity. If we had an exceptionally unfavourable year, there might be something to be said for it, but we have not had an unfavourable year. Our trade is increasing and prosperous beyond our hopes, and in this time, of all others, the Government say that we must reduce our Sinking Fund, which we are laying up against a rainy day. What

would we say of a private individual who managed his affairs in such a fashion? We should say he was on the straight road to ruin, and say it rightly and justly. I contend that it is a weak and a false policy on the part of the Government, having spent the money of the country under the guidance and instruction of Her Majesty's Ministers, not to place the responsibility of the country before it, and not to show the country that increased expenditure must mean increased taxation. Supposing we continue as at present for two or three years more, are you going to abolish the Sinking Fund altogether, or impose fresh taxation? This is a happy-go-lucky system. You hope something will turn up in the future which will help you, but your hopes are not justified by the observations of business men or the financial condition of the country. We are told by the supporters of the Government that we are still paying off a greater proportion of the National Debt that we did some years ago, but I submit that the doctrine of equality of sacrifice in any year should be observed. If we are prosperous now we ought to pay off more rather than less. The amount it is proposed to allocate under the new arrangement is a very much smaller proportion of our income than the amount which was appropriated for that purpose some years ago, when both our national income and expenditure were less. Therefore I say that it is not on lines of this kind, not by shirking our responsibilities, that the Empire of this country has been built up. It is not on lines of this kind that it can be maintained. The weak and pusillanimous lines which we are adopting now are not the lines which the country has a right to expect from the Government. They are not the lines on which the Government will obtain the support of the thinking portion of the community, or the lines which make for the stability of this country. Therefore, for my part, I shall oppose the proposal of the Government on every opportunity which comes in my way.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Debate on the Resolution, according to the ordinary practice of the House which has been followed, I think, to-night, is of rather

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a miscellaneous description. Various subjects naturally come up for consideration, and this is not the occasion certainly upon which I should attempt to review the financial policy of this Administration, with its great majority, which for four years has enjoyed great surpluses which were not its own, and which by that policy, at the end of four years, has achieved a deficit, which it proposes to meet by suspending the fund for the liquidation of the Debt. That is a very serious financial consideration, which, upon the Second Reading of the Finance Bill, I think the House of Commons will feel called upon carefully and critically to examine. I should not have troubled the House again to-night but for this—that I think it is desirable at once that we should take some notice of the defence which has been offered by the Government. What they cannot, and what, I am sure, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not, deny is a very grave proceeding is the invasion of the Sinking Fund for the liquidation of the Debt. In my opinion, the reasons which have been offered for the course are even more serious than the step itself which has been taken. We have had only, in the first instance, the laboured apology which was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his speech, and I observed what seemed to me a very true remark in some journal, that he appeared, without success, to be endeavouring to convince himself of the propriety of his proposal. We have since had a very remarkable document—the Treasury Minute. I have known the Treasury long, and I respect it much, but I do regret that at the end of the nineteenth century, of 50 years of education under Sir Robert Peel, under Sir Cornwall Lewis, under Mr. Gladstone, and under Sir Stafford Northcote, such a document as that should have emanated from the Treasury. It exhibits, in my opinion, a contradiction and an abandonment of all the sound principles of finance which for 50 years have been preached in that Department, and which have resulted in the great financial prosperity of the country. Then, Sir, we have had the additional advantage of a light and airy discourse upon finance addressed to the dames of the Primrose League by the First Lord

of the Treasury. We must take him to be the principal authority, for I know that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is only the Second Lord of the Treasury, and that the First Lord of the Treasury is the Leader of this House. The honourable Member for King's Lynn described that elementary treatise on finance in language which was extremely appropriate. But, Sir, the serious part of this matter is that the defence of the particular Measure which the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to take is absolutely fatal to the whole of the Sinking Fund in the future. There is not an argument advanced in that Minute, there is not an argument brought forward by the First Lord of the Treasury in his speech to the Primrose League, which is not fatal to what remains of the Sinking Fund after this deduction has been made from it. That is the real point to which I wish to address my remarks, in order to show the House how this is. Now, of course, these financial authorities profess an ardent devotion to the Sinking Fund. The First Lord of the Treasury said the other day that any attempt to destroy the Sinking Fund would be a national misfortune. That is his view. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer is stronger still. He says it is really the only safeguard in these days from something like financial ruin.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I was not talking of the Sinking Fund then. The right honourable Gentleman has quoted from a part of my speech which alluded to the manner in which we now provide for the payment of the interest and the repayment of the capital of the Debt, which we borrow for what I may call reproductive purposes. What I said was, that our only safeguard from financial ruin was that we should provide as we go on for the repayment of that Debt. I was not referring to the Sinking Fund for the old Debt at all, although I attach very great importance to it.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I accept, of course, that explanation, but I am quite sure that the Chancellor of the Exchequer shares the opinion of the First Lord of the Treasury that any attempt to destroy the Sinking Fund

would be a national misfortune. Now, Sir, it is worth while to examine how far the problem which he proposes in this Budget is calculated to destroy the Sinking Fund. I will only quote the language of the Treasury Minute. The Chancellor of the Exchequer holds—

"That though it may be legitimate to suspend for a year the whole or part of the Sinking Fund, as was done in 1885-86"—

I read that with satisfaction, because that is a defence of the suspension of the Sinking Fund which took place under that Government for the purpose of meeting a national emergency—

"yet the proper annual provision for the discharge of the National Debt should constitute a lien upon the public revenue secondary only to the obligatory payment of interest."

Therefore the Treasury Minute places the maintenance of the Sinking Fund second only to the payment of interest on the Debt. I observe that the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India thought it necessary to assure the City of London that the present Government does not intend to repudiate the repayment of the National Debt. There are some remains even of financial conscience in the present Administration, and I was extremely glad to hear on the authority of the Secretary of State for India that there was no contemplation of immediate repudiation. I am sure the City of London must have felt safer the next morning. That was the explanation. He was understood to have referred to the Sinking Fund, but it was explained in this House that what he really said was that the Government were not going to repudiate the Debt.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (LORD GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I did not say that. The suggestion came from Sir John Hibbert, who, I believe, was an esteemed colleague of the right honourable Gentleman.

SIR W. HARCOURT: He did not say that the Government were going to repudiate the Debt; he was my colleague in the Treasury, and there was no attempt made of that character before. Now, what I want to show is that the course that the Government are pursuing is one which is necessarily and

inevitably fatal to this provision for the liquidation of the Debt, but I cannot help thinking that the Treasury Minute must have been drawn up with the express purpose of laying the foundation for the permanent destruction of the Sinking Fund. Well, if it was not, it is the clumsiest performance that ever emanated from a public office. Let us see what the argument is. The first doctrine is that the more you cut down the Sinking Fund the stronger it will become. That was a piece of financial ingenuity worthy of the present First Lord of the Admiralty. The first principle of the gospel of the Sinking Fund, it seems, is that the more you rob it the safer it becomes. Upon that doctrine, if a man has got £10 in his pocket you can take £5 out and tell him that the other £5 is safer because it would not be worth the while of anybody else to take it. That is the doctrine you apply to the Sinking Fund, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, who in a time of buoyant revenue first struck off something from the Sinking Fund, said, "Oh, but I diminished the interest on the Debt." Yes, that gave you greater resources, and so far from diminishing the fund for reducing the Debt it gave you greater means of reducing the Debt still further. He reduced it by £3,000,000, as the French say, *pour encourager les autres*; and that was the doctrine of the First Lord of the Admiralty. Now, these are all very fine sentiments of respect for the Sinking Fund, but let us see what is going to be their final effect. The First Lord of the Admiralty when he struck £3,000,000 off the provisions of the Act, and reduced the amount from £28,000,000 to £25,000,000, gave us a guarantee that it never should occur again. He was to be the first and only robber of the Sinking Fund. But he did not foresee that after the lapse of a few years there would come another Unionist Chancellor of the Exchequer with an equally predatory disposition who would strike off £2,000,000 more. So that we have now got £5,000,000 struck off the Sinking Fund in order to protect the £5,000,000 that remained behind, and these two repeated operations will make the whole quite safe. So you go on, and you strike off £2,000,000 more, and then the £3,000,000 will be per-

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fectly safe. Then you strike off the £3,000,000, when there will be none, and that will be absolutely secure. I am reminded of the well-known lines—

"My wound is great because it is so small,
Then 'twould be greater were it none at all."

That is the operation which is commenced by a Conservative Government for the purpose of making the Sinking Fund for the conversion of this National Debt secure. The whole argument that is put forward in defence of this proposition is one which makes the maintenance of the Sinking Fund in the future, in my opinion, absolutely impossible. Let us take the next argument upon which they rely, and see what that is. The right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury goes to the Primrose League and says it is monstrous to require the country to provide money only a portion of which is to go for the object to which they intend to devote it.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I did not say monstrous.

SIR W. HARCOURT: What was the adjective? At all events you approved of it, because in fact this proposal to cut off £2,000,000 is defended by saying that what you were doing is a thing you will not do any longer, and that is to require the country, to provide money only a portion of which is to go for the object to which they intended to devote it.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I do not know whether the right honourable Gentleman conceives himself to be repeating my argument; if so, he has entirely misconstrued it. What I said was that when stocks are 110½ the larger your Sinking Fund the larger the amount that was absolutely wasted to produce no result in the payment of the Debt, an arithmetical proposition which even the right honourable Gentleman will not deny. I also said it was very important to pay off debt, that some loss would be made and the point was how great that loss was to be.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then the loss is greater on the remaining £5,000,000 than on the £2,000,000 you

cut off, and this argument applies to the £5,000,000. Surely this argument is one which can be used by anybody who wants to reduce the £5,000,000; and so if you take off £2,000,000 more from that you will, at all events, have remedied the disadvantage to which you have referred.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: It is a question of degree.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Of course it is, and therefore this argument goes to the extent of the destruction of the fund by degree. It is like the old saying as to an artichoke, you take it off leaf by leaf, and at each such this argument becomes equally applicable to taking more off the millions you have left. You are advancing an argument to defend your present position which entirely destroys the security of what you leave behind—I think that is the proposition. Well, that applies to the whole of the Sinking Fund that you leave behind. It is said, "Oh, this only applies when the Funds are at a high premium." I do not quite understand how that argument is applied. I think the funds were 96 when the First Lord of the Admiralty cut off the £3,000,000; they were below par, that was an argument for cutting off £3,000,000. When they are above par that is an argument for cutting off £2,000,000. Whether they are high or whether they are low, a Conservative Government is always ready to cut off millions from the Sinking Fund. Their whole defence rests on the price of Consols at this moment, and it is a futile defence which has no foundation in fact or proof. Let us look at it on the assumption of the right honourable Gentleman; he says that Consols being at a premium it is an evil to pay off debt.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: *Pro tanto*.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Oh, *pro tanto*. Yes, that is the doctrine of the Government. It is *pro tanto*, always *pro tanto*, but it unfortunately happens your *pro tanto* is the Sinking Fund. I am obliged for the phrase. I might sum up your whole argument and in decent language call it a *pro tanto* argument.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I quite accept that.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then we may take it *pro tanto*. Now, let us see and examine this price of Consols. According to your argument, the price of Consols will necessarily go up because as the Debt is paid off and there is a greater demand for Consols from various causes the price of Consols will become higher and the argument becomes stronger, because every pound your Consols rise is an additional argument for not paying off the Debt. Therefore, every argument put forward is a deliberate argument for the ultimate destruction of the Sinking Fund and the paying off the Debt. It is perfectly obvious that if Consols rise to 120 instead of 110 then this argument is conclusive. In the words of the right honourable Gentleman, that to provide for the payment of debt in these circumstances is not to be thought of. There is a great deal of fallacy about the price of Consols, and the able speech of the honourable Member for the Whitby Division, coming as it did from an authority in commercial matters, and from the other side of the House, is well worthy the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and of Her Majesty's Government. Everybody knows that Consols have risen from the causes that have led to the rise of all other securities—the prosperity of the country and the great savings of the people who are seeking investment; and it is a remarkable fact that although in the last two years you paid off a considerable amount of debt by purchase, if I am not wrong Consols are at a lower figure now than they were two years ago—I remember they were at 112 then; I think they were a little above—113 I think. To-day they stand at 3 per cent. lower than they did two years ago, and yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer says that he has paid off many millions of debt! It is a delusive argument altogether. If you are not going to pay off debt because Consols are at a premium, then you are not going to pay off debt at all. I do not think that even the return of the First Lord of the Admiralty to the Exchequer would bring Consols down again to 95. Consols ought to be cheaper, because I remember very well in those days, when he became

Chancellor of the Exchequer, they were at 100 and he succeeded in getting them down to 95, and I remember at that time telling him in this House he was the only buyer of his own Consols. If you lay down the proposition that it is a financial evil to pay off debt because Consols are at a premium, I say it amounts to this—that you do not mean to pay off debt at all. I do not mean to say the Chancellor of the Exchequer will say that, but there are a great many Gentlemen among those by whom he is surrounded who hold that doctrine and will press it upon him. Of that I am perfectly sure. Then another doctrine put forth in defence of this procedure is this. You say the Sinking Fund is to be reduced—this is one of the great arguments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—in proportion to the reduction of debt. Why? Your means of reducing debt have increased; why, therefore, should your efforts to reduce debt still further be diminished? A more fallacious, a more unsound financial argument I never heard in my life. When the Debt was very heavy in the time of Robert Peel, you could not make great efforts to reduce it; all you could do was to make taxation tolerable to the people; but in proportion as your Debt has been reduced you become more capable in doing that for your own advantage and credit and the benefit of others who come after you of reducing debt. A more unsound and vicious financial principle there cannot be than that enunciated, that because of the proportion in which the Debt has been reduced you should diminish your efforts further to reduce it. When the burden is less upon you, then, therefore, without adding further weight or oppression to the people, you are able to do more for your own credit and the advantage of those who come after you. That is the third argument. Another most extraordinary argument is that the reduction is to be in proportion to the quantity of Consols in the market, and the right honourable Gentleman tells us this is a constantly diminishing quantity. Of course it is. If you go on reducing debt, if you go on increasing Savings Bank deposits, and if, in the accumulation of the wealth of the country, banks, insurance offices, and

other institutions demand a greater quantity of Consols, as they do, of course the quantity diminishes every day, and if you choose to lay down the principle that as they diminish you diminish your efforts to reduce debt, and you will diminish the Sinking Fund, and for its abolition that is an argument that becomes more powerful every day, and if the argument is good for anything it is for the constant, and recurring diminution of the Sinking Fund for the reduction of the Debt. There is another argument that expenditure is larger and therefore provision should be less. A most dangerous argument. Your policy is piling up for posterity, for your immediate successors, a far greater expenditure than you are now indulging in. Who is going to pay the expense of the Cape and Cairo scheme? Why, those who come after you. The Under-Secretary of State the other day, expressing himself in the vulgar tongue, said, "You cannot do these things on the cheap." You cannot, that is perfectly true. This I will say for the English people, if they do intend to embark on undertakings of this character it is not their desire or intention to do so on the cheap. When it is done it must be done in a manner worthy of a great nation, and that means great expenditure in the future. You are only incurring the liability. It is those who come after you who will have to pay for it, and when you are embarking in an expenditure no man can measure you take the opportunity to cut off the provision which shall relieve them from the liabilities you are imposing upon them. I call that a mean and pusillanimous policy, totally unworthy of the people whom you represent. I have shown, I think, some reason for saying the arguments by which this proceeding is defended are themselves fatal, ultimately and necessarily fatal, to the provision for the liquidation of the Debt. But I am not speaking of arguments only, but of the example set by a man of whom I speak with sincere respect—the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. If he has had to yield to this temptation, I do not know the man who follows him who is likely to resist it. He enjoyed for four years abundant surpluses and no temptations, but in the fourth year the temptation came when he had a

deficit, and he fell. Whether he will be the man who will ultimately destroy what remains of the Sinking Fund it is impossible to predict. The virtue of a Chancellor of the Exchequer is very much like the virtue of a woman. It is only the first step that costs. After that it is hardly worth while to make a struggle for your reputation. But look at the consequences! Sir, I know something of this. I know the life a Chancellor of the Exchequer leads, who says in a moment of impulsive frankness when he was charged, I think by the Member for King's Lynn to-night, with having had extravagant Estimates and expenditure, "Oh; it was my colleagues." I have no doubt it was. He accepted, of course, the responsibility. But there is one argument which the Chancellor of the Exchequer can use to his colleagues. He said, "If you don't be reasonable, you will have to increase the taxation." That is a very convincing argument when nothing else will convince them. But when they can say to a Chancellor of the Exchequer, "You have only to steal a million or two more, or £3,000,000 more, from the Sinking Fund," the Chancellor of the Exchequer is defenceless, and that is what will happen. They will say, "Oh, in 1899 you cut off £2,000,000, why next year or the year after should you not cut off £2,000,000 more." A greater encouragement to public extravagance it is impossible to conceive, or one which justifies any Member of this House in his desire to embark the country in some additional expense. It is, in my opinion, a most fatal proceeding. The First Lord of the Treasury put a remarkable question yesterday. He asked, "If important additional taxation had been thrown on the public, whether that additional taxation would have been borne with patience or impatience." I have no doubt that was a question which greatly occupied the minds of the Cabinet when they were considering the Budget. He says, "It is a question we may all ask ourselves with advantage." No doubt they asked themselves that question with advantage, and the answer is to be found in the Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. They have answered it with what I will call the opposite quality to that of courage. They have come to the conclusion that

additional taxation would not be borne with patience, but with impatience, because they know that the opinion of the people of this country is not at the back of their expenditure, otherwise it would have been borne with patience, and not with impatience. I have learned a good deal from the speech of the right honourable Gentleman yesterday, though I was not at the meeting of the Primrose League.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Hear, hear!

SIR W. HARCOURT: There is a fine moral sentiment conveyed in the speech of the First Lord of the Treasury. He says—

"It is easy to make speeches about the magnitude of the Empire, the greatness of the Navy, and other topics naturally dear to the national heart, and if we are not prepared when the time comes to pay any sacrifice which those great objects involve our patriotism is but lip service. It is worthless for every great national object; sooner or later—sooner, rather than later—its hollowness will become manifest to all the world, and we shall have to admit with shame when we talk of Empire, in perfect faith, no doubt, when we proclaim the blessings to the world at large which a commercial, peace-loving, and civilising Empire like ours confers, we are not prepared to carry the burdens which that Empire may carry with it."

There is a picture of yourselves painted by yourselves! A Daniel come to judgment! The "white man's burden"! Yes, the "white man's burden" means the suspension of the Sinking Fund. And it is a comment on the principle of the "white man's burden" that we seek the glory, we claim the pride, but it is those who come after us who are to pay the expense. Well, Sir, I venture to say that we on this side of the House have earned a right to condemn such a policy as that. We at least did not in our time succumb to the temptations to which you have so weakly yielded. No doubt we had our faults. Yes, but we were incapable of your financial poltroonery. We were in a very different position from you. We had a weak and precarious majority. We were assailed by a powerful, and, I will add, a violent Opposition. We had a great deficit, and we were face to face with a falling revenue. You to-day calculate upon a rising revenue of

£2,000,000 this year. We felt it our duty to prevent great Estimates, which resulted in a large deficit—a deficit as great as that which you had to encounter—and we had the honesty and the courage to meet it. What was your temptation to suspend the Sinking Fund compared with that which was offered to us with all our political and all our financial difficulties in those days? No, Sir, we believed that the country, when we demanded this expenditure, would support us by meeting it and making the necessary sacrifices. We did not resort to these fallacious pretexts for the purpose of escaping the liabilities which we called on the country to meet. We presented a scheme to meet the national liabilities, which received the assent of the House of Commons and the approval of the country.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No!

SIR W. HARCOURT: It was a financial scheme, which, by majorities of 13, we passed through the House of Commons, and which you, with your majority of 150, have not dared to alter. It is true that you have lived for four years on the proceeds of that financial scheme, and, now you have come to trust to your own resources—what are they? The cutting off of the provisions for the payment of the debt of the country. You have revelled in those surpluses. You have a deficit, and how do you meet it? You meet it by running away. We trusted the public to make provision for our expenditure. You do not dare to trust the public, for you have shirked calling upon them to meet those liabilities. That is very different from what it was in the days of your Tory predecessors. It was on Primrose Day that this pusillanimous policy was displayed and defended by the First Lord of the Treasury. Sir, I remember the day when Tory finance was of a different character. In the year 1859, when Mr. Gladstone succeeded Mr. Disraeli, in times when the great French scare took place—now we always have scares; in those days they came at intervals; now they are chronic—Mr. Gladstone had to meet an increase for the Army and Navy of £5,000,000, and how did he do it? The income tax was 5d. He proposed to raise it to 9d. in that year, and collected the extra 4d.

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in the six months. And in the year 1860 it was said that he took the produce of the long annuities in the time. But why did he take them? They were part of the great reconstruction of the whole of our commercial system in the treaty of commerce with France, which is the root and foundation of our present prosperity—that system which has been consecrated by the experience of 40 years. That was the provision that was made. And then Mr. Disraeli came forward and supported those proposals—and he used an argument which is well deserving of your attention and consideration—he said, in supporting his great opponent in those financial proposals—

“I would first, however, observe that, totally irrespective of the bad financial policy of raising unnecessarily in times of peace money by loan, I can imagine nothing more impolitic, as regards the opinion of Europe of our position, than at the present moment of pressure, when the amount of £4,000,000 to £5,000,000 is required to place the armaments of the country in a proper state, to make it appear that this powerful country is unable to defray such an expenditure without resorting to extraordinary measures.”

And now, when the country is twice as rich as it was then, and when its resources are infinitely greater, and you are called upon to meet an additional expenditure of £4,000,000 or £5,000,000, you resort to these extreme measures. You are the unworthy successors of the man you met to celebrate yesterday. There was a soundness about the finance of those times which seems entirely wanting now. As to this Budget, of course it appeals to what I will call the lower and more selfish instincts of mankind. Nothing could be more agreeable to the taxpayer than that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should come and preach the doctrine, “Spend what you like; we will not call upon you to pay for it.” That is certainly very likely to be an agreeable utterance. But, if you think that financial principles of this kind will commend themselves to the deliberate judgment of the English people, you greatly mistake the temper of the nation. They respect men who call upon them to make the sacrifices which are necessary for the national advantage; but they expect that those men should treat them with confidence,

and should tell them what is the price that they ought to pay for it. You may carry this Budget, as you will, by the majority you possess. You know already that, even in this House among your own supporters, there are men who doubt its wisdom and its policy. There are many outside too—men who know on what principles the safety of a commercial nation and the glory of a great people depend—who will not approve of this wretched shift to which you have resorted. And, though we may not be able to save the Sinking Fund, at least we may enter our protest on behalf of the Party to which we belong against what I can only call an ignominious Budget.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER: I think that the Question asked by my right honourable Friend yesterday—namely, whether the people were patient or impatient of taxation—was not entirely absent from the mind of the right honourable Gentleman during the speech to which we have just listened. He has expressed the opinion that the proposal to reduce the fixed Debt charge is necessarily and inevitably fatal to the Sinking Fund. We may appeal, I think, to the fact that the price of Consols has not been in the slightest degree affected by that proposal. The right honourable Gentleman drew a contrast between these proposals and the action of the Government, of which he was a Member, some years ago. He accused us of financial poltroonery; and he held himself and his colleagues up as patterns of honesty in their financial Measures. But, Sir, the right honourable Gentleman himself has three times been responsible for a suspension of the Sinking Fund.

Sir W. HARCOURT shook his head.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER: There are people, I know, who look upon the Sinking Fund as a sort of financial Ark of the Covenant—a thing which, in no circumstances, is to be touched. That is not the view of the right honourable Gentleman, or of any responsible person in this House, or in the country. It is universally admitted—and it is the great argument in defence of the Sinking Fund—that,

in case of war, the whole of the Sinking Fund must be suspended.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I said so in my speech; and I read from a Treasury Minute, in which it was stated that a temporary suspension of the Sinking Fund for national emergencies was perfectly justifiable.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER: Certainly; and I am not arguing that a temporary suspension is the same thing as the proposal which I have made. I am only contending that the Sinking Fund is not in itself the inviolable thing which some speakers and writers appear to imagine it to be. It is admitted that, in a war, the whole of it would be suspended; and it is also admitted that in a time of trial, quite apart from war, the Sinking Fund might be temporarily suspended. The right honourable Gentleman has done that himself, and quite rightly. I am not at all finding fault with his action. But supposing I had made a proposal of the kind, supposing I had come down to the House, and said: "Our expenditure, mainly for warlike purposes, has enormously increased this year, and will be largely increased next year, mainly on account, as the Committee are aware, of the new Naval Programme which was inaugurated last year—I propose that in consideration of these circumstances, and considering we are, as the honourable Baronet the Member for Coker-mouth has said, practically in a time of peace, presenting a war Budget, that the new Sinking Fund should be suspended for two years." I really believe that for that proposal I would have had the blessing of the right honourable Gentleman.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I would rather not.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER: I think I would have got an affirmative answer to that. Now, Sir, I am accused of cowardice in having made the proposal which I have placed before the House. It would have been perfectly possible for me to have made the alternative proposal that I have suggested. But why did I not do so? Because I have not made this proposal of the reduction of the fixed Debt charge

in order to meet the deficit of the year. Honourable Members, and the right honourable Gentleman himself, throughout this Debate have treated this matter as if I had taken up this question solely with reference to this year's deficit. Honourable Members may believe me or not, but I can assure them that it is absolutely contrary to the fact. I have had this very difficult question of the proper amount of the fixed Debt charge, and the arrangement for the reduction of our Debt, under consideration for more than two years. I was very nearly making a similar proposal last year to the House. And why did I not? Because, in the first place, I thought it was rather too far distant from the period with which I desire to deal—namely, 1902. And, in the second place, because I remembered what was said of my right honourable Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty when he made a proposal for reducing the fixed Debt charge, and through that operation was able to remit taxation. If any one looks back to the Debates of that year, he will see that the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth, who denounces me so vigorously to-night, and Mr. Gladstone, both argued that the crime which my right honourable Friend then committed was not so much that he proposed to reduce the provision for the redemption of the Debt—they admitted that that might be sometimes necessary—but that he proposed to reduce it in order to remit taxation. And I felt that if last year, when I had a surplus, I was to make that proposal, I should have been met with the same objection, which, to my mind, was not entirely an unreasonable objection. But I had this matter still under my consideration, and having made up my mind to deal with it, it is only a coincidence that I have dealt with it in a year in which there is a deficit. I am accused of cowardice, but I knew perfectly well what would be said of me when I brought it forward. If I believed, as I do believe, that the present arrangements for the reduction of the Debt cannot be maintained consistently with the permanent maintenance of the Sinking Fund system, then I should have been guilty of cowardice, and I should have been shirking my duty if I had hesitated in bringing this proposal forward from fear of abuse. The

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honourable Member for Haddington, who spoke earlier in the evening, showed, I think, a fairer estimate of the difficulties of the question than the right honourable Gentleman who has just sat down. There are difficulties in this matter which are new: there can be no doubt of that. In the first place, the only kind of debt with which we can now deal in the reduction of the Debt is Consols. Two and a Half per Cents. are a very small amount. They are largely in the hands of Government Departments: they are rarely on the market; and therefore the only kind of debt in which we can operate to any extent in order to reduce the Debt is Consols. In the second place, the premium on Consols has been continuously high for several years—more than 110 and 112, and although that premium has been so high, I am in a position which Chancellors of the Exchequer were not in some years ago. I cannot avail myself of that premium in order to convert the Debt and reduce the rate of interest. As the Committee are aware, Consols cannot be reduced until 1923. And, in the third place, we have as our competitors in the Consol market, when we are entering that market to reduce the Debt, enormous sums required to be invested for the deposits in the Savings Banks. I saw with surprise a statement attributed to Lord Welby the other day, that it is not the business of the Government to find investments for the people. Why, to the tune of something like eight or nine millions a year we have to find investments for the Savings Banks money, and we are limited by law for those investments to Consols, and to such Government securities as may from time to time be available, like the Local Loans Stock, or the recent Guaranteed Greek Loan. Now, the honourable and learned Member for Haddingtonshire saw the difficulty which apparently the right honourable Gentleman does not see. He saw the difficulty of continuing to buy Consols at a premium, and he said—

“If you want to reduce your Debt, do not reduce your Sinking Fund. Why not set up more Terminable Annuities with the two millions by which you propose to reduce the fixed Debt charge.”

I will tell the honourable and learned Gentleman why. The total amount of

Consols held by the Commissioners of the National Debt on account of the Savings Banks is 103 millions. If I were to apply that two millions a year to terminable annuities which would expire in 1923, which is not a short term, I should have to cancel no less than 60 millions of Consols. I am about to cancel 15 millions as it is, and that would be 75 millions in all. I do not think anyone would contend that it would be right for those who are in charge of the Savings Banks Fund to lock up in terminable annuities so large an amount of their funds as 75 millions out of 103. Then the honourable and learned Gentleman has suggested—

"Why do you not lend this money to India or to the municipalities?"

I will tell the honourable and learned Gentleman. Because we could not get it back again when it would be wanted. The time when this money might be best employed in redeeming Consols is the time when Consols can be redeemed at par, and I know that the Indian Government would not be willing to incur large liabilities to this country on the understanding that they must produce the money at a certain date. And for obvious reasons. There might be a famine or there might be a war which might make it impossible for them to redeem that pledge. And so far as regards the municipalities, all that is possible in that way is now done through the Local Loans Fund. We lend money at 2½ per cent., and there are very few municipalities that can borrow on better terms. And, therefore, I venture to say that the suggestion of the honourable and learned Gentleman is one impossible to be carried out in connection with the Sinking Fund for the National Debt. I admit, however, that with regard to the Savings Banks deposits, this question is a very fair matter for consideration. The Savings Banks are very dangerous competitors with us in the Consol market, and if Parliament should think fit to extend the power of investment of the Savings Banks deposits no doubt the Consol market might be relieved, but I would warn honourable Members that that is not so simple as it seems. Because, after all, we guarantee the Savings Banks depositors, and the Savings Banks depositors must be content with a low

rate of interest; and if in place of investing in our Funds this money that we guarantee, we invested it in inferior securities yielding a better interest, the depositor would think that he ought to have a higher rate of interest than now. I think that the honourable and learned Gentleman will see that that involves some little danger to the Savings Banks. But I do not deny that the matter is one well deserving of consideration, and I think that it ought to be considered at an early date. But now, as it is, we are face to face with the difficulties to which I have alluded. I listened most attentively to the speech of the right honourable Gentleman, but I failed quite to understand whether he really contends that the fixed Debt charge should never be reduced at all, until the Debt is paid off. That is really the crux of the question. It is a question of principle. If the right honourable Gentleman holds that view, I can only say, with due respect, that I absolutely disagree with him.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I cannot answer that question. We may be paying off Debt of a hundred or two hundred years.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Yes; but it is a question that will arise much sooner than that. The right honourable Gentleman, I am sure, if he looks at it fairly, instead of dealing with more general arguments, will see that that is the real difficulty. He admits that the Consol market is narrow, and I have shown the difficulty of investment. I think the right honourable Gentleman feels himself the difficulty. But supposing the fixed Debt charge had never been reduced from 28 millions, supposing it were to remain at that figure for some years to come, why, Consols would be much higher than now. It must be obvious that the effect of applying a largely increasing annual amount of many millions a year to the purchase of Consols, both by increasing the demand, and by putting more Consols in the hands of the Government, should raise the price of Consols. If you go on until you have to invest 12 or 15 millions a year in Consols, instead of six, or seven, or eight millions, long before you get to that point Consols would be prac-

tically unpurchaseable. I will venture to add that it never was expected or intended by those who discussed the question when the Fixed Debt Charge was initiated that it should permanently remain at £28,000,000. Nobody who looks back will find a more able speech than the one by Mr. Gladstone against the whole scheme. Mr. Gladstone showed—and, it appears to me, with an experience nobody else possessed—Mr. Gladstone showed how in 1819 it was decided to appropriate a fixed amount of five or six millions annually to the redemption of the Debt, and how that broke down. He showed how Sir George Cornwall Lewis's plan also broke down. And let me refer to what the right honourable Gentleman said with regard to the contrast between Mr. Disraeli's finance and our own in this matter. In the year 1858 Mr. Disraeli had an estimated deficit of nearly £4,000,000. In the same year the income tax was due to fall from 7d. to 5d., and if he had acted on the proposition we are now asked to act upon, his obvious course would have been to postpone the reduction of the income tax, which would have increased his revenue by £1,000,000. But he rejected that course, and he decided to abolish the Sinking Fund established by Sir George Cornwall Lewis, which was to come into operation that year, and that reduced his expenditure by £1,500,000. That is the contrast with our action which the right honourable Gentleman makes. But that is not all. Mr. Gladstone warmly endorsed Mr. Disraeli's action, and when the next year came, and he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, no doubt he increased the income tax, but why did he not reduce the Sinking Fund? Why, because with his full approbation, Mr. Disraeli had abolished it already. The very next year he availed himself of the falling in of £2,000,000 of what were called the Long Annuities for the purpose of the reduction of taxation, and we are now asked—in spite of these examples which the right honourable Gentleman has held up to us as worthy of our imitation, as convicting us of cowardice and degeneration—we are now asked to add to the income tax in order to maintain the amount devoted to the reduction of debt at a sum far beyond anything hitherto devoted to it, and at a sum which will,

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in my belief, before many years are over render it impossible to redeem the Debt at all. I was quoting Mr. Gladstone's opinions on the subject of the Fixed Debt Charge. Mr. Gladstone showed how all fixed appropriations had broken down. Sir Stafford Northcote answered—

"If the circumstances of the country should materially alter, it would only be right that we should take steps to take off that which we now propose to put on, in view of the present and probable immediate future of the country. . . . We were now paying off our Debt, so far as the terminable annuities were concerned, at the rate of £3,700,000 per annum, and all that he asked the House to do was to sanction the continuance of the present burden on the country until circumstances should arise when it might become prudent for the Government of the day to propose a change in the scheme. . . . It was impossible to bind the country for all time. . . . There were undoubtedly two limitations to the Government proposal. One was that, if a time should arrive when it would be impossible with advantage to get stock enough to redeem it would be open to the Finance Minister of the day to propose some different legislation; and the other limitation was that if a time came when our circumstances greatly altered, and when we were called upon to make far greater exertions than at present, then we should have in this system a reserve which could be easily and properly made applicable."

Well, Sir, I maintain that both these circumstances affect us at the present moment. I contend it is reasonable to hold that the present taxpayers are entitled to have some advantage from the reduction of the rate of interest on the Debt. I think the House almost unanimously admitted, when my right honourable Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty was Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he was right, when the interest on Consols was reduced by $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., in giving the taxpayers of the day some benefit from the reduction. I maintain the proposition, in spite of what the right honourable Gentleman said to-night, that the taxpayers of to-day are also entitled to some reasonable benefit from the reduction of interest arising out of the reduction of the amount of the Debt. I am told I am sacrificing my own virtue to save the virtue of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of 1902. I argued the other night that he would be perfectly justified in devoting £2,000,000 of the terminable annuities which would then fall in to the benefit of the taxpayers of the day, and he would also be justified in 1903 in

devoting the reduction of the rate of interest on Consols that would occur to the benefit of the taxpayers of the day. But, I contend, I am equally justified in anticipating that £2,000,000 from 1902. I gave the reasons the other night; but, having done so, I am also bound to provide that the Fixed Debt Charge shall not again be reduced on account of those terminable annuities in 1902, by prolonging, as I propose to prolong, those terminable annuities to a later day. That is practically what I have proposed to the Committee. I do not want, considering the lateness of the hour, to continue the discussion of this complicated matter to-night. I will venture only to say that I do not think that what I have proposed deserves in any degree the censure of the right honourable Gentleman, that it still retains for the purpose of reduction of the Debt nearly £6,000,000, almost identically the sum he himself said was sufficient to devote to the reduction of the Debt in the year 1886-87. If I do not propose to increase the taxation of the country in order still further to increase that sum, I can only say I do not believe that in that action I am doing anything that will really interfere with a reasonable and persistent reduction of the Debt. On the contrary, I am convinced that if the policy which the right honourable Gentleman has suggested to-night were carried out the time would very soon arrive when the people would be disgusted at paying for Consols an infinitely greater premium than they do now, when the whole scheme would fall through, and the Sinking Fund which he desires to defend would be entirely abolished.

*MR. FLETCHER MOULTON (Cornwall, Launceston): I should feel quite ashamed of intervening in a contest in which such great magnates as the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer have just been engaged if I did not feel that there was in this question a side which concerns others than Chancellors of the Ex-

chequer. I refer to the honour of the English nation, which in my view of the case is at stake, and which concerns us all equally. And I have this advantage, that I propose to speak of this matter as a thing concerning our national duty, and when I look on the other side of the House I see very many faces that I know in other relations of life, men who sustain a high position in business, and to whom I should appeal among the very first if I wanted to prevent in ordinary business life the carrying out of such proposals as we are asked to sanction as a nation. I am satisfied that if it were not for the pressure of Party there would be no stronger supporters of the policy of maintaining the existing system of paying off the National Debt than the honourable Members who sit on the Benches opposite. I propose to commence by considering for one moment the question of the ground on which we pay off National Debt at all. In my opinion, no nation has a right to put a mortgage on posterity. You have no right to say that each generation shall come into existence burdened with heavy debts, in the contraction of which it has had no word; but you have a right to say, that inasmuch as the events of a nation's life are very various, inasmuch as at times we have long spells of peace purchased by the courage and sacrifice which have borne us through dangerous times of war, you are entitled to require that there shall be a fair averaging of the expenses of a nation over a series of years, so as to equalise the demands made upon it by reason of these ups and downs of its national career. Take the case of the English Nation. Nearly 100 years ago it had a long spell of war. I am not for a moment going to say that the expenditure incurred in those long Continental and other wars was not of a most extraordinary kind, justifying the spreading of the total expense over a long series of years by the process of borrowing. But I do say that a very short war now would cause quite as much expenditure

as those 60 years of almost continuous war that marked the reign of George III. The consequence is we have not here to deal with expenditure which was so completely exceptional that we must abandon all the laws of average. We have no right to say that such an expenditure cannot happen more than once in the lifetime of a nation, and therefore there is nothing that would justify our allowing the burden to remain in perpetuity. We must therefore take care that by our national arrangements we shall reduce the Debt in times of peace, so that it does not burden the nation for a longer series of years than is warranted by the character of the expenditure that caused it. Does the present charge exceed what is reasonable for this purpose? At the time the Debt was at its height what was the amount of the Debt charge on the English nation? The amount was at least as great as the utmost we have ever asked should be applied to the reduction of the Debt. In other words, all we have ever asked is that the Debt charge as it was then should be maintained until this Debt is wiped off. This is surely no unreasonable demand, and no less will enable us to discharge the Debt within the period in which, in fairness to the future of our nation, it ought to be paid off. I contend that this matter is not only apart from Party, but that both Parties in the State ought seriously to support the Government of the day in making full provision for thus paying off the Debt. This is necessary because it is impossible to go to the ordinary voter and explain to him the complicated reasons of State that make it necessary to maintain the national credit. We must act in this matter regardless whether the right course be popular or not. Let me not be misunderstood in saying this. I do not say that we act in this assembly from higher motives than the English nation act, but I say that we have to apply those high motives that we believe actuate the nation to more complicated questions than can be brought before the constituencies as a whole, so that they

can form a judgment on them. And thus it ought to be the pride of both Parties to let it be known to every Government that they would have no support from either side if they ventured to lower the standard of our efforts in the discharge of national obligations. And this includes the payment of capital indebtedness as well as interest. If you pay the interest on the Debt only, you are not discharging the national obligations; you are only postponing them. You are leaving just as great a burden upon those who come after, who will be yet farther removed from the causes which led to the contraction of the Debt than ourselves, and who will rightly say they ought not to bear in this unmitigated way the burden of a Debt incurred long ago by their remote ancestors. Surely it ought to be the duty of all of us to resist the temptation, and to strengthen the hands of Governments in resisting the temptation to ease monetary taxation by means of abandoning the repayment of the Debt. I have pointed out that the amount that we at present repay annually is lower to the extent of £5,000,000 to £8,000,000 than the Debt charge was at the time of the contraction of the Debt. But there is another consideration which shows that our rate of payment off is too low rather than too high. If we had chosen to maintain the fixed Debt charge as it was when at its highest the Debt would have disappeared in about 150 years, and I would ask the House if it really considers that 150 years is too short a period for the discharge of a Debt which we are every moment liable to recontract; because no one doubts that if a serious war broke out in these days of costly warfare, the huge Debt we have more or less got rid of would be surpassed by the new Debt we should almost immediately contract. But I will not dwell further upon this point, because I do not believe for one moment that there is a feeling in this House or in the country that the amount we have devoted to the repayment of the Debt is too large. The arguments of the Chan-

cellor of the Exchequer in support of its reduction have not been mainly based upon an appeal to any such feeling. They have been much more specious. He has suggested that at the present time Consols are much above par, and that therefore it is uneconomical to spend the national money in purchasing them to reduce the Debt. He suggests that it would be more prudent to defer our efforts until 1920, when they can be purchased at par. I do not think that any one of the excuses that have been put forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in favour of his device for avoiding taxation has produced any effect either inside this House or outside it, except this one, and it merits some analysis, which I know perfectly well that the audience to which I am speaking will be able readily to follow. What is the cause of Consols being above par? It is due to two causes, and it represents two totally different influences. If you look at the price of Consols, you will find that they remained a little below par rather than above par from the date of their conversion until the last four years. Then an extraordinary change took place. They rose steadily to something like £111 or £112. What was the reason for that? The first and main reason was unquestionably the fall in the natural rate of return for pure investment. I mean by that phrase the annual rate per cent. you get for the use of money when the security is so perfect that there is no risk whatever tending to increase that rate. At present it is customary to talk of this rate of interest for pure investment as being $2\frac{1}{2}$ or $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. per annum. But this rise in the price of Consols during the last four years shows that it is not so. In about 24 years these Consols can be redeemed at par, yet at present they stand at some 11 per cent. above par. In other words, the world recognises that the present rate per cent. for Consols is about a half per cent. more than the true rate per cent. when there is no risk. But we cannot take advantage of this fall in the rate per cent. for another 24 years.

This was one of the conditions of the conversion. In other words, we are paying at this present moment a half per cent. more than the natural interest when there is no risk at all, and we must continue to do so for the next 24 years unless we get rid of the obligation by purchasing at the higher price and cancelling them. The Chancellor of the Exchequer shrinks from purchasing Consols above par, as though the excess above par was money thrown away. I appeal to any honourable Gentleman with the slightest commercial knowledge that this is a fallacy. Supposing a man has undertaken to pay 6 per cent. on a certain sum of money lent for 10 years certain, so that he is not to be allowed to redeem it for 10 years, and he wants to get rid of the liability, does he not know that he must pay for that obligation far more than the mere capital value of the money to be repaid, because he has undertaken to pay a rate per cent. which is higher than the natural rate per cent. for a certain number of years? Therefore, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer is afraid to pay more than the par value of Consols lest he should be throwing away national money, he has shut his eyes to the fact that he is getting rid not only of the capital liability, but also of the burdensome obligation of paying a rate per cent. during the intervening years higher than the natural rate for perfectly secure investments. Is anybody going to say that this furnishes a reason for our not purchasing them at the present moment? We are purchasing them at their true and fair value so far as this extra premium on Consols represents the extra rate per cent. that we promise to pay, and if that were the only cause which enhances Consols it ought not to make the Chancellor of the Exchequer pause for one moment in redeeming them as fast as possible. But there is another cause at work. It is quite possible to force a particular security above its natural financial value by giving to it certain privileges, or—what amounts to the same—by subjecting rival securities

to certain disabilities. This cause has undoubtedly been at work. Our statutes as to the securities in which Government funds may be invested are so restrictive that they force up Consols beyond their natural price. Take the case of the savings banks. They are only allowed to invest in Consols or like securities. This immediately creates a special market for Consols alone, which drives them to something above their value, because, although there may be other securities of equal value as securities, they do not command an equal price, because they may not be used by the savings banks for the purpose of investments. The same thing took place in America when the National Banks were obliged to deposit a certain number of bonds of the Federal debt as security in return for the status they enjoyed. This gave a special value to these bonds, which raised their price higher than their economic value would have warranted. I quite agree that the present price of Consols may be affected by this cause, although the influence cannot have yet become very marked owing to the vast amount of Consols that exist at the present time. But I appeal to the House as to whether this is not a problem which a Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to feel it his duty, as well as his privilege, to attack by some other method, and not make it a cowardly excuse for reducing the Sinking Fund. It is one that must be solved. Are we going to allow something like £500,000,000 or £600,000,000 to remain as a burden on posterity in this country, which may not have the same wealth as we have, simply because we are going to stick to a principle which drives Consols to a false value? It is not a matter which arises only when you spend £7,000,000 a year in the reduction of Debt. Even if you apply not £7,000,000, but £5,000,000, or £3,000,000, or £2,000,000 regularly to the reduction of the Debt, you must thereby lessen the amount of Consols, and the price will go up if the present restrictions remain. It is therefore a

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difficulty which must be met, otherwise the possibility of reducing the Debt during the next 20 years will absolutely go. If you are going to meet it, I ask what better time can there be for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to solve this problem than a time which the right honourable Gentleman describes as one of unexampled prosperity, when you have no special difficulties to face, and when you have a Government with such a large majority that it can secure the adoption of the method it selects. That is a moment at which you ought to deal with this problem, which must necessarily affect to a serious degree the removal of our present National Debt. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, by his action in diminishing the Debt charge because the price of Consols is high is attempting to delude the country by making it appear that these difficulties are insoluble, when they are the very questions Ministers are put in office to solve. I listened with the greatest patience and the greatest interest to every word that the Chancellor of the Exchequer said in his Budget speech. I listened to-night to all he has said in defence of the Budget, and what does it all amount to? He professes to be a strong supporter of the principle of reducing the Debt, and he says, in a tone of sincerity which indicates that the first person he has deceived is himself, that he has lowered the amount that is to be used this year for the extinction of the Debt because he hopes thereby to prevent his successors from further lowering it. It is a strange instance of self-delusion. He has not only rendered it easier to his successors to still further reduce it by setting them this bad example, but he has done it in a way which proclaims the doctrine that it ought so to be reduced from time to time without giving any principle to guide us as to when and to what extent it should be done. This leaves it as an expedient ready to hand for any Government that seeks to avoid unpopularity, and it is one that will be most largely used by

the worst Governments, for it is they who are driven to purchase support. The only true way to reduce the Debt as the national honour requires is to adopt some system which is to be adhered to in good times and in bad times, unless there comes some overmastering necessity which makes us momentarily depart from it. But for the self-sacrifice of those who preceded us our charge for interest on the Debt would have been heavier than the whole Debt charge at this moment. We have reduced it from £28,000,000 to £25,000,000, and now it is to be reduced to £23,000,000. If each year you are going to consider what is convenient in this matter from the point of view of the political exigencies of the moment, we shall very soon abandon all serious attempt to carry out the repayment of the Debt. The true explanation of the decision of the Government to reduce the sum appropriated to the repayment of the Debt is not that which they have given, but a far different one. It is that we have a Government that dare not tax the poor and will not tax the rich, and who therefore prefer to lower the standard of national effort in the discharge of national obligations, rather than risk the momentary unpopularity of meeting increased expenditure by correspondingly increased taxation.

• Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Duty of Customs now payable on Tea shall continue to be charged, levied, and paid on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine, until the first day of August, one thousand nine hundred, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say);—

Tea . the pound . Four Pence.

INCOME TAX.

Resolved, That Income Tax shall be charged for the year beginning the

sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine, at the rate of eightpence.—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Resolutions to be reported this day; Committee to sit again this day.

ANCHORS AND CHAIN CABLES BILL.

Read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

BUSINESS DEFERRED.

COLONIAL LOANS FUND BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading (9th March) further adjourned till Monday next.

INEBRIATES ACT (1898) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

IMPROVEMENT OF LAND BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

CHARITABLE LOANS (IRELAND) BILL

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

PALATINE COURT OF DURHAM BILL
[H.L.]

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

SOLICITORS BILL [H.L.]

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING (CLAUSES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

**METROPOLITAN STREETS ACT (1867)
AMENDMENT BILL.**

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

**LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF
PARLIAMENT) BILL.**

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [23rd February] further adjourned till Thursday next.

FARNLEY TYAS MARRIAGES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

TELEGRAPH (CHANNEL ISLANDS) BILL
[H.L.]

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

**PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE
(SCOTLAND) BILL.**

Committee deferred till Monday next.

**JUSTICES' DISQUALIFICATION REPEAL
(SCOTLAND) BILL.**

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (1888)
AMENDMENT BILL.**

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

**SCHOOL BOARD CONFERENCES (SCOT-
LAND) BILL.**

Second Reading deferred till Friday 28th April.

**SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON
SUNDAY BILL.**

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday 2nd May.

**MERCHANT SEAMEN (RATING CERTI-
FICATES) BILL.**

Second Reading deferred till this day.

LIMITATIONS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

PARLIAMENTARY DEPOSITS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

**SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS
(SCOTLAND) BILL.**

Consideration, as amended, deferred till this day.

House adjourned at fifteen minutes
past Twelve of the clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 21st April 1899.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat upon the Woolsack at Four of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—

Barry Railway.

Cardiff Railway.

Central Electric Supply.

Dublin Improvement (Bull Alley Area).

Horsforth Urban District Council (Water).

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway (New Railways).

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway (Various Powers).

Rhondda Urban District Council.

Tenterden Railway.

Wetherby District Water.

And also the certificate that no further Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bill—

St. James's and Pall Mall Electric Light.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

DUNDEE GAS, TRAMWAYS, AND EXTENSION BILL [H.L.].

A witness ordered to attend the Select Committee.

CROWBOROUGH DISTRICT WATER BILL.

Committee to meet on Tuesday next.

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MID-KENT GAS BILL [H.L.]
Reported with Amendments.

KEW BRIDGE BILL [H.L.]
Reported with Amendments.

KIRKCALDY CORPORATION AND TRAMWAYS BILL [H.L.]

Read a third time; Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read a first time; and referred to the Examiners.

ILFORD GAS BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read a first time; and referred to the Examiners.

MIDLAND RAILWAY BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read a first time; and referred to the Examiners.

PARISH COUNCILS (TENURE OF OFFICE) BILL.

To be read a second time on Thursday the 4th of May next.—(*The Lord Ribblesdale.*)

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (ABERAVON ETC.) BILL [H.L.].

Read a second time (according to order).

ST. ANDREWS BURGH PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL [H.L.].

Read a third time (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

G

LAND CHARGES BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

PETITIONS.

OWEN'S COLLEGE, MANCHESTER.

Petition of the Court of Governors of the Owen's College, Manchester, under their common seal, praying for leave to introduce a Bill "to amend the constitution of the Owen's College, Manchester; for conferring further powers on the President and Governors; and for other purposes"; together with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed thereto; read, and referred to the Examiners.

BROOKE'S PARK (LONDONDERRY).

Petition for a Private Bill; together with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed thereto; read, and referred to two Irish Judges.

EDUCATION (REVISED CODE).

Petition for Amendment of Revised Code of 1899; of the Church Schools Association for the Archdeaconry of Birmingham; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

MUNICIPAL TRADING.

Petitions;—that a Committee should be appointed to define the extent to which municipal trading should be sanctioned by Parliament;—of Leamington and Warwick Tramways and Omnibus Company, Limited;—Westminster Electric Supply Corporation;—Enniskillen Gas Company;—Mansfield and District Master Builders' Association;—Farmers' Federation, Limited;—Property Owners' Association of St. Helens;—Newcastle-upon-Tyne Incorporated Trade Protection Society;—Committee of Leicester Ratepayers and Property Owners Association;—Bradford and Shelf Tramway Company, Limited;—Bristol Tramways

and Carriage Company, Limited;—Crystal Palace District Gas Company;—Western Wagon and Property Company, Limited;—Bristol Stock Exchange;—Imperial Tramways Company, Limited;—Reading Tramways Company, Limited;—Corris Railway Company;—London United Tramways, Limited;—and City, of Gloucester Tramways Company, Limited;—Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

VACCINATION ACTS.

Petition for repeal of; of Guardians of the Poor of the Hackney Union; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURN.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) (EVICTIONS).

Return for the quarter ended 31st March 1899; presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILLS.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 9) BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Clontarf—Was presented by the Earl of Waldegrave (for the Earl of Dudley); read a first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 51.)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 10) BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Camborne, Dukinfield, Fenton, Finchley, Shipley, and Swinton—Was presented by the Earl of Waldegrave (for the Earl of Dudley); read a first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 52.)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 11) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to East Retford, Failsworth, Pemberton, Stourbridge, Swinton and Pendlebury, and Wednesbury—Was presented by the Earl of Waldegrave (for the Earl of Dudley); read a first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 53.)

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

THE DECORATION OF ST. PAUL'S.

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS: My Lords, I rise to ask Her Majesty's Government if they can by any means put a stop to the decorative destruction of St. Paul's that is now going on apace under the orders of the Dean and a Committee of Taste; and whether, if this is beyond their power, they will take such legislative action as will save our other cathedrals from the possibilities of a like evil fate. Perhaps your Lordships will allow me to say a few words in explanation of the reasons for putting this Question on the Paper. No doubt some of your Lordships read the newspapers, and, reading the newspapers, you must have observed of late that a good deal has been said and written in the form of letters and leading articles with reference to what is called the decorations now going on apace in St. Paul's. On such a question, with so many tastes, there is no hope of agreement as to whether the decorations are or are not beneficial. But there are certain things, I think, upon which we are all agreed. We must, for instance, all agree that perhaps the most beautiful specimen of Renaissance church architecture in the world is St. Paul's. It is a grand monument to the architect that conceived it, it is the pride and glory of our nation, and I venture to think it is a precious heritage which we ought to the best of our ability to preserve for those who come after. It is a building perfect in proportion, ideal in proportion and in all that is required in buildings of this

kind, and I think it is one of those cases where "Unadorned adorned the most" applies. I venture to think that when you have grandeur of form, proportion, harmony, and vastness, as you have in St. Paul's, decoration is a secondary matter—that it is subordinate to the general effect of the architecture and ancillary to the building, and ought not to be obtrusive. It ought simply to add richness to the building, if you like, but form part of a harmonious whole. If these principles are sound—and I venture to assert that they are—how are they being borne out by what is being done in St. Paul's? Anyone who has been, or who will go there, will see this—that whereas all the decorations in a church of that kind should be congruous, and should be consistent with the architecture of the church of the period—that period being in the case of St. Paul's the period of the Renaissance—will find Byzantine mosaics covering the choir. I do not intend to give my own opinion on this matter, but shall endeavour to quote authorities to which I hope your Lordships will give due weight to. The first person who raised this question in the public Press was a very able architect, a cousin from the other side of the Atlantic—Mr. Howe—and I would rather the question of the value of these mosaics and these decorations should be stated in this gentleman's words than give any crude opinions of my own. This is what Mr. Howes said in an article which appeared in the "Fortnightly Review":—

"How it happens that the Dean of an English Cathedral does pretty much what he likes with the building under his charge I do not understand. The principal mosaics used in St. Paul's to-day by the present decorator are the revival of those in use centuries ago in Ravenna and Venice."

He writes further of the "crude horrors" that disfigure the walls of St. Paul's, and says—

"These expensive but coarse barbaric mosaics cover the walls of St. Paul's with their disfiguring motives. The work threatens to make the decorator known as the spoiler of St. Paul's."

He ends by saying—

"Stop, before it is too late, before St. Paul's becomes a confusing medley of badly devised painting and mosaics, the outcome of one of the greatest errors of the present time."

But, my Lords, it is not a question of merely putting up these mosaics. I am told on good authority that the original stonework over nearly the whole choir has been chiselled away to make room for these mosaics. I think that that is a very serious matter. You cannot undo evil of that kind after it has been done; but there is evil, I venture to think, still going on which it is possible to do away with or arrest the further progress of. Besides this treatment of the choir and the mosaics which are being spread more or less over the church in very curious, grotesque form, the stonework has been stencilled with red paint, and along the cornices and friezes and arches there is great black lettering. I do not know what the wording is, but I am told there are some very strange diphthongs in order to get letters within a certain space. If your Lordships would go and look at these mosaics and decorations, and would then turn your backs upon the choir and look round on the, as yet, untouched nave and aisles, you would see what a relief it is, and how much to be deprecated is this system of decoration which, begun in the choir, has been extended to the transept, and will no doubt be extended to the nave and aisles of this most beautiful building unless steps are taken to prevent it. A memorial has been drawn up and presented to the Dean on the subject. The memorial is signed by the President of the Royal Academy, and bears the name of Lord Windsor, who is well known for his taste in architecture, and others who are well entitled to speak on the subject. This memorial says—

"In the words of Dean Milman, 'The solemnity and the harmonious simplicity of the edifice may be disturbed under the present scheme.' We would venture to submit that the opinion of experts (appointed by the Royal Academy and the Royal Institute of British Architects) should be taken as to whether the stencilling in red paint of the principal mouldings and cornices under the dome, and the black lettering on the friezes are a form of decoration likely to impair the chief architectural features of the structure as originally conceived and carried out by Sir Christopher Wren."

I was asked to sign that memorial, but I declined because I felt it would be in vain to go on bended knee to the Dean and ask him to do what the memorial asks; and that I was wise in my generation is proved by the answer that was

given by the Dean, which was the purest snub that could possibly be given to any memorialists. But since the presentation of the memorial, I may state there has been an interview between the Dean and some representatives of the Institute of Architects, and that the Dean has said that the stencillings are temporary and the matter will be considered. I venture to think that something more than that is needed, and if your Lordships will refer back to the public prints you will see the strongest possible article in "The Times," every word of which I should like to read to your Lordships. Excellent articles have also appeared in the "Saturday Review" and other papers, and a letter on the subject from an Italian visitor to London appears in one of the papers, and I would ask your Lordships to allow me to read this letter, which absolutely and truthfully describes the state of things existing in St. Paul's. The writer says—

"I have the honour to send you this letter, translated for me from my own language by an English friend. For the first time I am visiting your great city. I arrived a few days ago, eager to see all the beautiful works of art which it contains. Since I was a boy I have heard of the English, and how some of them would almost go to war to preserve an old building or statue in my country. At Venice, at Florence, at Rome, the municipalities are ignorant, and wilfully destroy many beautiful objects. But there are some Italians, like myself, who love the exquisite works of art which we have inherited. So when your countrymen, a few months ago, founded an English society to protect Italian monuments we were amused, but not ungrateful. I think that a certain Commendatore Richmond was one of the principal members."

When I was in Italy last spring I was asked to sign a memorial calling upon the Italians to protect their monuments. I declined to do so, as I thought it was a cheeky thing to do, and again it has been proved that I was wise in my generation. The Italian visitor continues—

"You can imagine that I expected to see in a capital of a country so anxious, not to say so violent, in the defence of Italian art, every new building and statue as beautiful as possible, and every old work of art protected with the eager, not to say intrusive zeal which is displayed by your country in reference to mine. I have seen, Sir, the Temple Bar Memorial, and the statues on the Thames Embankment and at Westminster. I wish to see no more. In many Italian towns there are statues of Garibaldi which are better. I have also seen your Palace of Justice, and some other

public buildings, some new streets, and Piccadilly Circus. The latter, which should have been a noble *piazza centrale*, is a hideous, shapeless space. It does not seem to me much more beautiful than the ugly Piazza Vittorio Emanuele at Florence, which the English so loudly condemn. I have, therefore, seen enough of your new buildings. The municipality of London is evidently no more artistic than the municipality of Florence. At last, this morning, I think to myself that there remain the old buildings, which are no doubt protected with love and reverence. I will visit the Cathedral of London. As soon as I arrive I see that it is the masterpiece of a great artist. The beauty of the building is in its form alone, for there is no colour as in Italy. I enter by the west door. The interior of the nave, also designed without colour, is superb. Here is a building which even the municipality of London would not dare to touch. I advance, and suddenly I perceive under the great dome a space mottled with colours so hideous, so incongruous, that even an Italian house painter would hesitate to use them in the decoration of a restaurant. Pink, and green, and yellow! They are exactly the colours of the English lobster salad—the pink of the lobster, the green of the lettuce, the yellow of the sauce. The yellow shines in spots, the green glitters in misshapen panels, but the pink is formed by a red pattern on a white ground, resembling a cheap wall paper. Beneath, in gigantic black letters, is an inscription. Though I understand some English, I cannot read it, for the letters join and mingle together in strange and unknown diphthongs. Even here, then, the municipality of London has laid its desecrating hand! But no! I ask for information from a sacristan, and discover that this imitation of a lobster salad is the work of the Commandatore Richmond himself. *Diavolo!* It is he who would tell us in Italy how to manage our own business. As I hurry away, I notice an alms-box inscribed, 'For the decoration of the Cathedral.' Is it possible that anyone can contribute? Tomorrow I return to Florence to inaugurate an Italian Society for the Protection of Ancient Monuments and Beautiful Edifices in England. Unless we, the lovers of art in Italy, interfere soon, the exterior of your beautiful Cathedral may also become pink and green and yellow."

The letter is signed "Leonardo Tiziano Buonarrotti." The question is whether there is not some means of putting a stop or check upon the proceedings, or at any rate of having the subject of the decorations considered by a proper authority such as is suggested in the memorial—namely, the President of the Royal Academy and of the Royal Institute of Architects. What the position of the Government is in the matter I do not know. I had been under the impression that there was no power under any existing Act of Parliament of controlling the action of the gentlemen who are now dealing with the decoration of St.

Paul's, no doubt in a way that appears wise and excellent to them. But since I put my Notice on the Paper, no later than last night I received a letter from a gentleman—he does not wish his name to be mentioned—who is as high an authority on Ecclesiastical Law as there is in the country. This gentleman writes—

"It is competent to any member of the Cathedral body to question the propriety of these decorations by petitioning the Bishop of London as Visitor of the Cathedral to hold a special Visitation of the Cathedral in respect of the alterations now being made in the Fabric; and there is an appeal from the Bishop's decision to the Arches, and from there to the Judicial Committee. There are 30 Prebendaries of St. Paul's, any one of whom is entitled to take this step, and the cost of his doing so might be defrayed by subscription. See 'Phillipotts v. Boyd,' Law Reports and Privy Council Appeal Cases, p. 450."

Thus there is a power if it can be put in motion. Surely some of the Prebendaries take the view that what is being done is not quite right. I have also got a letter from a Member of the Committee of Taste, whose name I cannot mention, saying that he disapproves of everything that has been done, and that he is not in a position to resign. I do not know what answer I shall get from Her Majesty's Government, but according to this letter which I have received from a great ecclesiastical authority, there is no occasion for the Government to act until they find that the powers already existing are not exercised. All that is required to be done is to put the law in force, and if the law is put in force, I have little doubt as to what the verdict will be. All that you would require would be to get one of these Prebendaries who objects, and guarantee him against any expense he might incur, and I have no doubt there are many who would be glad to contribute towards the cost. Be that as it may, what I venture to do now, my Lords, is to put to the Government the Question of which I have given notice, and I hope my noble Friend the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whom I am glad to see back from his holiday in health and vigour, will give a satisfactory answer as to the intentions of the Government in the matter.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, I shall accept my noble Friend's challenge by answering the Question he has put. I do not propose to follow him in certain other parts of his speech, or to interfere in the issue which he has set up between himself and Il Commendatore Richmond. That he will, no doubt, follow to its proper issue; and I have no doubt that right will succeed. But it is neither my official duty nor within my personal capacity to express any opinion as to whether his censures are correct or whether they are overstrained. It is not generally thought to be part of our duty to qualify ourselves in that branch of political subject. But it is not very difficult for me to give an answer to my noble Friend's Question, though it might be very difficult to follow the argument which he has laid before the House. I am asked whether we can by any means put a stop to what my noble Friend calls—

"The decorative destruction of St. Paul's which is now going on apace under the order of the Dean and the Committee of Taste."

I am afraid that Question I have no answer to give except an absolute negative. We have no authority, no power over the management of the structure of St. Paul's or of any other Cathedral. In the course of his speech, my noble Friend indicated another mode of action, which was that the Prebendaries out of their abundant wealth should go into the courts, and, by process of law, compel the Dean and Chapter to take my noble Friend's view upon the decorations that are being achieved or perpetrated in St. Paul's. My Lords, I doubt very much whether they will be induced to take that course. Everybody who has had anything to do with it knows that ecclesiastical litigation is one of the most expensive amusements in which a man can indulge; and if you add to that the expenses that may naturally be supposed to attach to artistic litigation I do not think the prospect is one by which the Prebendaries of St. Paul's, however wealthy they may be, will be attracted. My noble Friend added, quite in a parenthesis, that the ultimate decision of this question would rest with the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. That un-

fortunate body has many burdens on its shoulders already. It is elected no doubt with a conscientious and absolute regard for the duties it will have to perform, and as those duties include many things—the interpretation of all the law systems of India, including the Vedas and the Koran, I believe; the law prevailing in the Cape of Good Hope and other Colonies; all the Admiralty Law; and last, but not least, the settlement of all our ecclesiastical disputes—I think everyone must admit that their duties are sufficiently extensive, and that the men who are selected must be men of special capacity for the decision of all these subjects, and must be men not only of no common power, but equal to no common amount of labour. If you add to that that they are to determine whether the architecture which was prevalent in the days of the Exarchate of Ravenna is proper to apply to St. Paul's, and what the precise tone of the decorations should be—whether it should be of that staring character which my noble Friend says "pulls the eyes out of your head," or of that more modest tint which I have found that all decorations in this happy City invariably assume—whether these or any other should be the guide of the Dean and Chapter in their present duties, that is among the things which, according to the plan of my noble Friend, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council will have to determine. And among the many duties, responsible and terrible, which they have to discharge, exposing them to criticism from all sides, I think this new duty which my noble Friend would put upon them would be the heaviest and most terrible of all. I think it is quite right to say we have nothing to do with the decision whether anyone will invoke this species of litigation. That remains to be seen. I feel that the result is much more likely to prove their own devotion and to show that they do not spend their incomes for their own enjoyment than to attain any practical result. This happens to be a question which embraces in itself two of the most fertile subjects of discord which have been discovered to separate human beings or to encourage litigation with each other. It is highly artistic, and it is also highly theological, and anyone who undertakes litigation to which that character may be rightly applied is a person of no common devotion

and courage. My noble Friend takes a step further, and asks whether, if we have no power, we will take such legislative action as will save our other cathedrals from the possibility of a like evil fate. To deal with the practical question first, I may say that the state of public business in the other House of Parliament is not at all likely to be such as to enable the Leader of that House to enter upon so thorny a question. But I do not know why in such a matter as this the Government should be alone the authors of a salutary legislation, and I do not know why the other House of Parliament should have the monopoly of such agreeable occupation. I would suggest to my noble Friend that he should lay on the Table a Bill and himself assume the character of legislator, and let us see what provisions he proposes to enable us to save all other cathedrals from the possibility of a like evil fate, by which I understand him to mean not only the clutches of Il Commendatore Richmond, but also from generally making the decorations too brilliant and conspicuous and committing an error as to the precise date in the history of Christendom to which these decorations shall be attached. It is a heavy duty, and I should be curious to see how my noble Friend proposes that it should be discharged. That he will invite the Executive Government to accept that function I can hardly imagine, but I can assure him beforehand that, whether we sit on this side or the noble Lords opposite sit on this side, I am quite certain no political Party will be inclined to give this duty to the Government of the day. My noble Friend will have to find a tribunal, and he must make up his mind that, when he begins to select that tribunal, every possible fault will be found with every selection that he makes, and whatever he proposes it will be pointed out that he has made the worst possible selection that can be thought of. And at the end of it all, though it has been rather deprecated as a low and sordid view, these decorations, whatever their character, to whatever school they belong, must be paid for by somebody, and it is quite possible that the tribunal will order decorations which no munificent person can be found to pay for. I do not know that anything can be done, but I can quite

imagine the Dean and Chapter saying the critic they prefer is the critic that subscribes. I do not know whether the machinery my noble Friend will set up if he presents us with this Bill which he has in his mind—I do not know whether it will meet that difficulty, which is not the smallest; but I can assure him that he will carry with him our hearty sympathy in his desire to get rid of this subject of difference between persons of great eminence and of undoubted goodwill; and if he is able to lead us to not only a beautiful, but an uncontested decoration of this splendid, ancient monument that has been handed down to us, he will deserve the thanks of his generation.

***LORD RIBBLESDALE:** My Lords, I do not think any Member of your Lordships' House can be surprised at the answer which the noble Marquess has given to the Question put by the noble Earl; but after all, that answer, distinct and to the point as it was, does not console those who, like myself and like many others, agree with my noble Friend that a good deal of harm is being done in St. Paul's Cathedral. Of course, after the answer of the noble Marquess, it is quite clear that the only thing we have to rely upon to put a stop to that is public opinion, and therefore I think a Debate in your Lordships' House on this point may be of some little use in that way. We are not great experts, we are not like the artistic Italian whose letter the noble Earl has read, but the expression of the views of this House on the decoration of St. Paul's Cathedral may be taken as an expression of the general taste, a sort of "man in the street" exposition. Sir Christopher Wren left behind him, I believe, no record of what he wanted done, and this is now a source of difficulty. But there is something to be said for what the Committee of Taste, headed by the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, are doing about the mosaics. The literature on the subject brings out that Sir Christopher Wren himself designed to fill in some of the places left in his stonework with mosaics, and he thought of bringing over four eminent Italians to do this work. Eminent Italians, however, in those days were distrusted by the English people, and the thing came to nothing. Later on, when in 1773 Sir Joshua Reynolds made

certain proposals for decorating the Cathedral to the Dean and Chapter, it is related by Bishop Newton, who was then Dean of St. Paul's, that Sir Christopher Wren had always complained that his wings were clipped, and that money which had been devoted to the fabric of St. Paul's was appropriated by Parliament to William III.'s wars. Be that as it may, I am very sceptical as to whether Sir Christopher Wren's views as to mosaics and the present Dean and Chapter's ideas of mosaics are at all identical. What is quite certain is that Sir Christopher Wren did not approve of any decoration of St. Paul's Cathedral during his lifetime, notably he disapproved of Sir James Thornhill's frescoes, and it is conceivable that before he died he changed his mind on the subject of mosaics, and determined to leave the Cathedral in a state of severe simplicity. It is quite true that in his later days he had little to do with St. Paul's, but he once shed tears when some sort of decoration was forced upon him that he did not approve, and he died, I believe, as regards St. Paul's, a discouraged and a disappointed man. He would have shed tears now if he could have seen the coloured stencilling which is being applied to the dome of St. Paul's. I am very sorry that this has been done. I am glad to see a letter from a noble Earl opposite, who is on the Committee of Taste, which appeared in "The Times" this morning, that what is being done has been put a stop to. I wish other noble Lords would get up and say they are also glad of that. It is in that way that we may enforce public opinion, which is already set against the further interference with St. Paul's. I will, in conclusion, quote from a very excellent letter written by Lord Windsor, who is a man of great taste and knowledge, and which appeared in "The Times" of 6th April. In that letter Lord Windsor said he hoped the Dean and Chapter might pause before laying hands upon the transept and the nave, and would consider whether the real value of Wren's work is not being lost in this new and original treatment.

EARL EGERTON: My Lords, I have a very great respect for the Dean of St. Paul's, and I protest against his action with very great reluctance as criticising the action of a personal friend, and as

Lord Ribblesdale.

one who has done much to improve the service at St. Paul's, and with whom I have every sympathy in his desire to make the decoration of St. Paul's as effective as possible. But I am bound to join with those who object to the possibility of a Dean of a Cathedral having the power to alter the character of his Cathedral by a system of decoration. We do not want St. Paul's turned into a St. Peter's at Rome, nor an imitation of St. Mark's at Venice, nor of St. Sophia at Constantinople. I have had an opportunity of seeing all the principal buildings in the world where mosaics are being carried out, and I venture to say that in no part of the world is there a conjunction of this style of decoration with the Italian style in which St. Paul's is built. The decoration of the dome is not of so much consequence, because it is not easily distinguished, but what we do complain of is, that the great breadth and the simplicity of St. Paul's is marred by the introduction of small and insignificant ornaments which entirely do away with the general effect of the building. Blotches of colour are placed in panels where bare spaces are intended. In one of these panels there is a fine bold carving of foliage in Sir Christopher Wren's best style. In the middle of this a sort of coat-of-arms has been placed, and the bold foliage with which it is surrounded cannot but strike anyone as incongruous. As an Ecclesiastical Commissioner I feel bound to protest against such an alteration by the Dean and Chapter as will diminish the architectural value of this great cathedral, which has been handed down to us from mediæval or post-mediæval times.

VISCOUNT CLIFDEN: I think we owe a great deal to my noble Friend for having brought this matter forward, and although Parliament has no power in the matter we may help to bring public opinion to bear on what many of us think is a desecration of one of the most magnificent buildings in the world. I have always thought, when this desecration was talked of, why not leave it alone? It was magnificent before, and what has been done in the way of decoration is in every instance incongruous and not pleasing. Of course, it was perfectly clear, even before the noble Mar-

quess gave his answer, that the Government have not power to act in this matter. But the noble Marquess laid great stress on the ruin that would fall upon the Prebendary who moved in this matter, but my noble Friend who raised this question made it quite clear that what he proposed was that the Prebendary should be assured that he would not be out of pocket, but that the money would be found by subscription. The only thing I can see that can be done is for my noble Friend to rouse up one of the Prebendaries and get the law that at present exists acted upon. I suppose most of your Lordships have seen these very disagreeable mosaics; if not, I hope they will look at the mosaic recently unveiled in the Central Hall of the Houses of Parliament, in which they will see a specimen of the sort of work which is being done in St. Paul's, and which, I should say, was only fit for an East-end public-house. I have never seen anything so inartistic or so ugly in my life. I am glad that attention has been called to this matter, because we all know what influence the Dean has in his Cathedral, and it is only by getting public opinion to bear that anything can be done to stop this vandalism.

EARL BROWNLOW: Before this matter drops, I should be glad, as a member of the Dean's Committee, and, I am afraid, the only member of that Committee who is present to-night, to say a very few words. The noble Earl on the Cross Benches, in putting his Question, has expressed an isolated and individual opinion.

***THE EARL OF WEMYSS:** That is what I did not do. I gave opinions drawn from the Press and other sources, which I believe to be correct.

EARL BROWNLOW: I understand that my noble Friend differs from Lord Windsor, and entirely objects to mosaic work at all in this connection. He objects to the stone being cut to prepare a bed for the mosaic. We know, unfortunately, very little of what Sir Christopher Wren's views were in regard to decoration; the only thing we do know is that at one period of his life he certainly was in favour of mosaic, which he called beautiful and durable material. The question of whether

mosaics are satisfactory or not is, of course, entirely a matter of taste, and I might remind your Lordships that when the choir of St. Paul's was reopened to the public, and the mosaics for the first time exhibited, there was a perfect pæan of approbation both from the Press and the public, in consequence of which a considerable sum of money poured in for the continuance of the work. But there is another question upon which my noble Friend appears to be entirely in accord with Lord Windsor and those who signed the memorial, that of the stencilling of the stone under the dome. The opinion has already been expressed by the Dean to the deputation of architects who waited upon him that that was to a great degree experimental. Sir William Richmond, trusting to his artistic knowledge, believed that this work would be effective, that he could produce an agreeable and pleasant effect, but now that the coverings are taken down, I am sorry to say I am convinced that his hopes have certainly not been realised. I know this to be the opinion of several members of the Committee, and, moreover, I have reason to believe that Sir William Richmond himself is anything but satisfied with the result. I wrote to the Dean some time ago telling him I thought it was very desirable that the work should be stopped, and he replied, telling me that he had already stopped it himself, and he has undertaken that it shall not be resumed, at any rate not till after a meeting of the Committee. A meeting of the Committee will be called as soon as possible, and they will decide what is best to be done under the circumstances. The whole history of architectural decoration is full of controversy, and Correggio and other artists have had much opposition to contend with at one time and another, although succeeding generations have spoken in the highest terms of their work. I can only hope that, under the severe light of criticism, Sir William Richmond may produce works worthy in the future to be ranked with those of his more distinguished predecessors.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I only rise for the purpose of offering my sincere thanks to the noble Marquess opposite for the answer which he has given, and in which he indicated

that the duty which my noble Friend wishes to be thrown on someone is not to be accepted by the Government. If those who sit on this side of the House should at any future time find themselves on the other side, I think they will be very glad that no precedent has been laid down by which they could be charged with the task of determining on matters of taste. I confess myself to be a person who has no taste. My reason for saying so is that, although—in common, I suppose, with all persons who have had any education—I certainly take pleasure in seeing fine works of art, I have never been able yet to find that there is any agreement whatever in regard to what is taste. Therefore, I have always thought it safer not to profess to have any particular taste whatever. I think it would be found that most of those who take a prominent part in the political affairs of this country have quite a sufficient burden thrown upon them not to have this additional duty, which is one almost impossible for them adequately to discharge. I would go further than that; I have no confidence whatever in what a Committee of the Government would do on this subject. I have myself, as a Member of the Government, taken part in the consideration of what should be the form of certain public buildings, and I have seen sketches that have been submitted of buildings which it was designed to construct, but I have never found any very satisfactory opinion to be derived from the Cabinet on the subject. I interfered once in a matter of taste, and I hope I was justified in so doing. When I was Foreign Secretary, I saw with horror a large dome rising up so as to obstruct my window at the Foreign Office, a structure due to the new Admiralty building. I represented the matter to my colleague on the Board of Works, and said that I had annoyance enough at the Foreign Office without it being added to by this dome every time I looked out of the window. I was happy to learn that this horrible structure was an experimental one, and to be assured that its size should be reduced, but I never have been able to understand why architects think that they improve the appearance of their buildings by covering them with little, or large, pepper-boxes. With regard to the particular matter before us, I have

not had an opportunity of seeing the new decorations, and should not express an opinion on them if I had, but I have read the correspondence which appeared in the newspaper, and the only remark which occurred to me was that the Dean and Chapter, who are entrusted with the preservation of so splendid and important a national monument as St. Paul's, would always do well to pay more attention than the Dean paid to a memorial coming from persons who certainly have as good pretensions to express an opinion on a matter of taste as probably any other body in this country. I think it would have been wiser on the part of the Dean, as well as more graceful, and more in consonance with the performance of the very important duties attaching to his office, if he had shown more sympathy and more consideration for the opinion that was expressed. It is worth while, especially in matters of taste, where there are such very wide differences of opinion, before coming to a conclusion on any great matter, to hear what can be said by persons who may be considered competent to express an opinion. I sincerely hope that as these stencillings, which are particularly objected to, are not likely to be proceeded with, so the whole decorations will be fully considered by the Dean, not only in the light of the advice, no doubt very excellent, of the Committee of Taste, but also in the light of such advice and opinion as can be obtained from bodies who have, at all events, some considerable public opinion behind them. I do not say the Dean is bound by any means to follow that advice and opinion; but what I say is that it is somewhat rash, and I think imprudent, to disregard opinion of that sort when expressed from quarters which are quite disinterested and by persons who have in their hearts the same desire which we all have—namely, to see that St. Paul's should be preserved in the most beautiful and satisfactory condition.

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS: I should just like to say that my Question, which the noble Marquess at the head of the Government has met with a *non possumus*—that would have been better applied to their socialist legislative Measures—was directed to a condition of things in which a Dean may be doing

a wrong or foolish thing, and I asked whether Her Majesty's Government has power to take any steps, or would endeavour by legislation to obtain power, to make our ancient cathedrals safe. I should have thought a Government would have felt it a duty to take some steps for the object, but that does not appear to be the view of the noble Marquess. The noble Earl (the Earl of Kimberley) said that I wanted a Committee of the Cabinet. That is the last body I should think of. What I want is an outside body, drawn from the Royal Academy, or composed of persons in whom the public would have confidence.

THE WELLINGTON MONUMENT.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: My Lords, I rise to ask Her Majesty's Government what steps are being taken to complete the monument of the Duke of Wellington in St. Paul's Cathedral; who are responsible for the preservation of the full-sized model of the equestrian statue, the head of which has been detached from the trunk; and where and in whose keeping is the head at the present time? I trust I need not apologise to your Lordships for bringing this matter to your notice. It is one, in my humble opinion, of very great importance. It is within the knowledge of your Lordships that on the death of the Duke of Wellington the sum of £100,000 was voted for a public funeral. Only £80,000 was spent, and in pursuance of a Resolution of Parliament the remaining £20,000 was voted for the erection of a monument in St. Paul's Cathedral. A few years afterwards—I think it was in 1855—from a large number of competing designs, that of the late Alfred Stevens was selected. I wish to know whether it is intended to complete that statue as Alfred Stevens designed it. Alfred Stevens is recognised as one of the best sculptors this country has had, and it is necessary to go back to the time of the Italian Renaissance to find any sculpture so perfect in design as this monument of the Duke of Wellington. I went to St. Paul's Cathedral to see this monument, and found that the equestrian statue was hidden away in the crypt of the Cathedral, but minus the head.

***THE EARL OF WEMYSS:** It is in bronze?

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: No, in plaster. I trust Her Majesty's Government, if they cannot use any influence with the Dean in reference to decoration, will be able to give some assurance that, in discharge of what is almost a national obligation to the memory of our greatest soldier, and in justice to the sculptor, the original design shall be carried out.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS: My Lords, I hope I may be forgiven if, in my answer, I show that my knowledge of this matter is not quite complete; but, as far as I can ascertain, the money that was voted by Parliament to the erection of this monument has been expended, and full-size plaster cast of an equestrian statue was completed from Mr. Stevens's design. Somehow or other the model appears to have belonged to Mr. Stevens, and from his executors it was purchased by a pupil of Mr. Stevens—a Mr. Stannus—and he from the Cathedral authorities obtained permission to store it in the crypt. It is not the statue, it is the model from which the statue will be afterwards made in bronze; but the money having run short, work was arrested in its present stage of development. It is fair to add that not the whole of the statue is in the crypt; the head has been separated—it is a very extraordinary thing how the heads of distinguished persons have become separated from their bodies—and has been retained by Mr. Stannus at his private house. That is the exact stage of the affair. I imagine that it is a question of money whether the development shall be carried to its natural conclusion, and for the answer whether the required money will be furnished, I am afraid I must refer my noble Friend to the proper authority over the way.

***THE EARL OF WEMYSS:** Although Her Majesty's Government profess ignorance, and are not prepared to take action with regard to the so-called decoration of St. Paul's, they have at any rate made themselves fully acquainted with the present position of this horse's head.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS: It is not the horse's head; it is the hero's head.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS: I quite agree with all that my noble Friend has said about the excellence of the monument. An experiment has been made as to the effect of placing the statue under the middle arch of the nave, on the left-hand side looking towards the choir. Lord Leighton was mainly instrumental in having the monument removed to its present position, where it has destroyed the effect and harmony of Sir Christopher Wren's great work. If this monument is to remain where it is now placed, the only thing that will restore the symmetry and balance of the nave will be the placing of a counterpart monument in the corresponding archway on the opposite side. And to whom could such a monument be more appropriately raised than to the Duke of Marlborough, the contemporary of Wren and a worthy companion to Wellington?

House adjourned at forty-five minutes after Five of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 21st April 1899.

MR. SPEAKER took the Chair at Three of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.:—

London County Council (Money) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION. STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for additional Provision in the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz.:—

London United Tramways Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

NORTH WEST LONDON RAILWAY BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Committee:

1. "That, in the case of the Belfast Corporation Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought not to be dispensed with."

2. "That, in the case of the London County Tramways, Petition for leave to deposit a Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought not to be dispensed with."

Report to lie upon the Table.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Mr. Halsey reported from the Committee of Selection, That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Law and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure: **Mr. Bartley**, **Sir George Fardell**, **Mr. Loder**, and **Mr. McKenna**; and had appointed in substitution: **Mr. Cochrane**, **Sir Walter Foster**, **Sir Alfred Hickman**, and **Mr. T. W. Russell**.

Mr. Halsey further reported from the Committee, That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures:—Sir Alfred Hickman and Mr. Charles Morley; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Bartley and Mr. Philipps.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—

Army (Annual) Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill intituled, "An Act to amend the Law with respect to the hearing of Appeals and Motions by the Court of Appeal." [Supreme Court (Appeals) Bill [H.L.]

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (SWANSEA) BILL [H.L.]

Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table;

Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL.

Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.

RUSHDEN AND HIGHAM FERRERS DISTRICT GAS BILL [H.L.]

Reported, without Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Bill to be read the third time.

TAFF VALE RAILWAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

LONDON, BRIGHTON, AND SOUTH COAST RAILWAY (PENSIONS) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

SHOTLEY BRIDGE AND CONSETT DISTRICT GAS BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

LISBURN TOWN COMMISSIONERS BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP 5).

Mr. Jeffreys reported from the Committee on Group 5 of Railway Bills, That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Tuesday next, at Twelve of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

GREAT NORTHERN AND STRAND RAILWAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition of the Association of School Boards in England and Wales, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EXECUTORS (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Greenock, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND RENTS (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Petitions in favour;—From Eccles;—and, Northampton; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Ayton;—Helensburgh;—Galashiels;—Earlston;—Govan;—Kirkintilloch;—Bonhill;—Greenock (three);—Glasgow;—Kilbarchan;—Barrhead;—Leith;—Crosshill;—and, Camelon; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SERVANTS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Worcester;—and, Bumpstead; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Cleckheaton;—Marshay;—Blackson;—Wortley;—Farnley;—and, Kippax; to lie upon the Table.

PALATINE COURT OF DURHAM BILL.

Petition from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, against; to lie upon the Table.

PARISH COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Govan, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW RELIEF (DISFRANCHISEMENT).

Petition from South Shields, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Greenock, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Worcester;—Halifax;—Castleford;—Stroud;—and, Martock; to lie upon the Table.

TEINDS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Stirlingshire, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

TEMPERANCE REFORM (THREEFOLD OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Greenock;—and, Duns; to lie upon the Table.

VACCINATION ACT, 1898.

Petition from South Shields, for repeal; to lie upon the Table.

RETURN.

ALKALI, ETC., WORKS REGULATION ACTS, 1881 AND 1892.

Copy presented,—of Thirty-fifth Annual Report on Alkali, etc., Works by the Chief Inspector, being for 1898 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 160.)

NEW BILL.

FINANCE BILL.

“To grant certain duties of Customs and Inland Revenue, to alter other duties, and to amend the Law relating to Customs and Inland Revenue, and to make other provision for the financial arrangements of the year,” presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday next, and to be printed. (Bill 162.)

QUESTIONS.

SINKING OF THE "KOWSHING."

LORD C. BERESFORD (York): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs how long the claims of a British firm respecting the sinking of the s.s. "Kowshing" has been decided in their favour as against the Chinese Government; whether the British Government have pressed their claim; and whether there appears any chance of a satisfactory settlement of the question?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. ST. JOHN BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): Her Majesty's Government have been pressing this claim on the Chinese Government for more than two years. In November last arbitration was proposed to the Chinese Government, but up to now the Yamen have made no reply. If within a reasonable time no satisfactory answer is given, Her Majesty's Government will be forced to consider what further steps can be taken.

MR. M. DAVITT (Mayo, S.): Declare war.

GOVERNMENT WORKS ON SALISBURY PLAIN.

MR. GOULDING (Wilts, Devizes): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether the large employment of labour by the Government for works connected with Salisbury Plain is likely to be of a lasting character; and, if so, whether the Government proposes to erect huts or other suitable shelter for the workmen engaged near the place of employment?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. J. POWELL WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): The completion of the works at present proceeding in the neighbourhood of Salisbury Plain is not likely to occupy much more time. In the event of other works being undertaken, the question of the accommodation available for the workmen employed will have to be considered.

ACCOUNTANT-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

MR. STEADMAN (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether he is able to give a reply to a memorial signed by the Tracing Staff of the Accountant-General's Department, presented to him early in January, praying for an alteration in the present leave system?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): On behalf of my right honourable Friend, I have to say that the matter is under consideration, and the memorial will be answered very shortly.

DEPTFORD VICTUALLING YARD LABOURERS.

MR. STEADMAN: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that a number of labourers employed at Deptford Victualling Yard are allowed to absent themselves from their employment on sick leave for periods ranging from four to sixteen weeks each year, during the whole of which time the men concerned are working for private employers; whether he will take action to prevent similar abuses in the future; and whether he will state the number of men who were absent from their duties at Deptford Victualling Yard during the last financial year for more than 21 days each?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): There is no reason to suspect that the facts are as alleged in the Question. Twelve labourers employed in the Victualling Yard were on the sick list during the past financial year for periods of four weeks and upwards, and the nature of their complaints in the majority of cases would seem to preclude the possibility of their working as suggested. Any labourer wilfully remaining on the sick list when fit to resume work at the yard would render himself liable to dismissal. It may be added that labourers are not allowed any portion of their pay when absent on account of

sickness. The number of labourers absent from the Victualling Yard during 1898-9 for more than 21 days each was 43. Each man is entitled by the regulations to be absent without pay for 14 days annually, which may be increased in special cases.

WEIGHT OF POSTMEN'S DELIVERIES.

MR. STEADMAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, if he can state on what authority the supervising officer at the East Central District Office has informed postmen that they are to carry 45lb. on delivery, contrary to the recommendations of the Tweedmouth Committee (page 20, line 2, weight of burden); when will an answer be given to the petitions of the E.C. postmen asking that definite instructions be posted in regard to meal times in each period of duty; and what punishment is to be substituted for fines for irregularities committed by officers?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (for Mr. HANBURY): There is no authority naming 45lb., but, with the Secretary's approval, the supervising officers at the East Central District Office have been entrusted with a certain amount of discretion, in view of the fact that many of the postmen begin their delivery at a short distance from the office and thus quickly reduce their burden. The petitions of the East Central postmen as regards meal times are being dealt with as part of the general question of meal times and will be answered in due course. As regards the last paragraph of the honourable Member's Question, punishments by fine are not inflicted in London.

ARRANGEMENTS OF POSTMEN'S DUTIES.

MR. STEADMAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, if in future alterations of postmen's times of attendance an effort will be made to fix regular hours, and thus avoid the risk of increased late attendances such as is involved in the arrangements now in

vogue for the 6th and 10th sections at the East Central District Office?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (for Mr. HANBURY): It is already the practice in revising the attendance of postmen to fix regular hours of duty as far as practicable, but the varying conditions of the work sometimes makes it impossible, as in the case of the arrangements to which the honourable Member refers.

SATURDAY DELIVERIES FROM THE G.P.O.

MR. STEADMAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, if he is aware that the arrangement by which about 400 men are now withdrawn from Saturday deliveries in the East Central District Office involves serious delay in the delivery of correspondence, and that on 18th March the Indian, China, and Australian mails, although they arrived at 12.40, were not sent out till after 4 p.m.; and if he will make arrangements to prevent this delay?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (for Mr. HANBURY): The arrangement to which the honourable Member no doubt refers is that under which letters are delivered in the East Central District on Saturday afternoon every two hours instead of every hour, as on other days of the week. Owing to most places of business being closed after 2.0 p.m., it is not necessary to continue the usual hourly service, and the postmen are employed at the office instead, in dealing with the heavy posting which begins earlier on Saturday. The mails from India, China, and Australia on Saturday, 18th March, arrived at times varying from 12.40 p.m. to 2.5 p.m., and, having been checked and sorted, were sent out for delivery at times varying from 3.50 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

INDIAN SUGAR IMPORTS.

SIR H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India what are the amounts and values of the raw sugar and refined sugar imported into India during the

last year, and the Customs duties paid on such sugars?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): Complete figures for 1898-99 are not yet available. For the year 1897-98 the figures were—Imports into India: Raw sugar, 373,000 cwts., Rx.76,000; refined sugar, 4,235,000, Rx.4,709,000. Customs duty realised on imported sugars at five per cent. *ad valorem*, Rx.240,000.

SIR H. FOWLER: Can the right honourable Gentleman say when the Report of the Debates in the Council will be circulated?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: No, Sir; they are in the printer's hands, and I should hope they will be issued within the next fortnight.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he can give the House particulars of the importations of sugar into India of a later date than 31st March 1898, and state how these later importations compare with the importations during a similar period in the previous year; and whether he will state, for the guidance of traders, what it is the intention of the Government to treat as a bounty in respect of which a countervailing duty may be imposed?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: The importations of refined sugar into India for the ten months ending 31st January 1899 were—From Mauritius, 1,388,859 cwts.; from Austria, 745,619 cwts.; from Germany, 365,093 cwts.; other countries, 397,386 cwts.; total, 2,896,957 cwts. In 1898—From Mauritius, 1,140,986 cwts.; from Austria, 653,821 cwts.; from Germany, 854,420 cwts.; other countries, 595,240 cwts.; total, 3,244,467 cwts. In addition to this, the total importations of unrefined sugar into India were, for the same periods, 258,950 cwts., 325,660 cwts. The Government of India have issued a notification specifying the countries which grant bounties, direct or indirect, on exportation of sugar, and the amount of the countervailing duties to be levied in each case. This notification will be found in forthcoming Blue Book.

ST. COMBS LIGHT RAILWAY.

MR. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade when the Order for the light railway from Fraserburgh to St. Combs will be issued; and what is the cause of the long delay?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): The matter stands in precisely the same position as it did in October last, when the Board of Trade communicated with the honourable Member. On the 5th August last the Board of Trade forwarded a copy of the Order in the form in which they were prepared to confirm it to the promoters, and asked for revised prints for formal endorsement. These prints have not yet been received and the Board of Trade have, therefore, been unable to confirm the Order.

BOUNTY-FED SUGAR.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will grant a Return of all the bounties, direct and indirect, on the production or export of sugar given by France, Germany, and Austria; and, if he is unable to supply this information, whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a copy of a Circular issued by the Secretary to the United States Treasury on 12th December 1898, giving particulars of the sugar bounties, direct and indirect, given by the principal continental countries?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Yes, Sir, I will grant the Return desired, and it may be desirable to supplement it by a copy of the Circular issued by the Secretary of the United States Treasury, as desired by the honourable Member.

KILLAVULLEN COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTION.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Cork Co., N.E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the action of Mr. George Foott, J.P., Carrigacunna Castle, Killavullen, Cork

county, in summarily dismissing from his employment on the morning of the 7th instant, the day following the county council election, a carpenter whom he had previously threatened to discharge unless he voted for Mr. Newman, the Unionist candidate; if he is also aware that Mr. Foott, in his magisterial capacity, refused to sign declaration forms for two personating agents of Mr. Thomas Barry, Nationalist candidate, giving as a reason for such refusal that these agents were not on his side; and if he will cause inquiry to be made into these allegations?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND (Mr. GERALD W. BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): I am informed that there is no foundation for the statements in the first paragraph. As regards the second paragraph, I am informed that Mr. Foott refused to sign the declaration form, not for the reason alleged, but because he considered it was the duty of the Returning Officer, or some person occupying a similar position, to sign the form.

LIGHTING OF PUBLIC THOROUGH-FARES.

GENERAL RUSSELL (Cheltenham): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether there is any prospect of the improved system of gas lighting, which has been introduced with such excellent results into the Mall of St. James's Park, being extended to other portions of the public parks and thoroughfares; and whether there is any means of compelling the local authorities to improve in a similar manner the lighting of streets throughout London?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS: I shall be glad to extend the system of lighting, lately introduced into the Mall, into other thoroughfares under my control as funds are available. My honourable Friend will have noticed that a considerable sum is again voted in this year's Estimates for improving the lighting of the parks. I would invite his attention also to the improvement I have lately effected in this direction in Trafalgar Square. As regards the streets in charge of local authorities, I am unable to make any statement, as the matter is altogether outside my jurisdiction.

MR. RHODES'S RAILWAY.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that Mr. Cecil Rhodes, in a speech delivered at Port Elizabeth during the late Cape election, is reported in the Press to have said that he was going to make the railway to Tanganyika, and would bring down millions of labourers and distribute them in the mines; that at Tanganyika they laboured at 2d. a day, and that they could so work mines which were not then payable; and whether this is the undertaking which Mr. Rhodes wishes the Government to guarantee?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I know nothing of the speech referred to by the honourable Member, but the guarantee originally asked for related to the first section of the line, which stops several hundred miles short of Lake Tanganyika.

IRISH GRAND JURY SYSTEM.

MR. DAVITT: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether any such office as a county solicitor existed under the late grand jury system of local government in Ireland; if so, by what statute, or under what order or sanction of the Local Government Board, was such an office recognised as part of the executive machinery of the country?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): In the technical sense, there is no such office mentioned in the Grand Jury Acts as that of county solicitor, but the Grand Jury has power to retain a solicitor and to raise money to pay his costs. It has been the almost universal practice of the Irish Grand Juries to retain solicitors for the discharge of their legal business, and to treat that retainer as continuing during good behaviour. In framing the Local Government (Ireland) Act in analogy to the English Statute, the Government were guided by the practice which actually prevailed, and in that Act treated solicitors, poor rate collectors, and others as officers, though, in a strict legal sense, they were not therefore entitled to that position.

EDUCATION OF NAVAL OFFICERS.

MR. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty when the Report on the education of naval officers will be published?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: It is not proposed to publish the actual Report on the education of naval officers, which is the work of a Departmental Committee. But such changes as will be adopted by the Admiralty in consequence of the Inquiry which has taken place will be communicated to the Fleet, and to the publication of these changes there will be, of course, no objection.

THE NEW WINE DUTIES.

MR. MARKS (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated loss which would result to the Exchequer if the application of the increases of duty foreshadowed in his Budget proposals were to be limited to foreign as distinguished from colonial imports?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: It is not possible to give an accurate estimate of what the loss to the Exchequer might be if the increase of the wine duties did not extend to colonial wines. On the present comparative consumption it would be £20,000 a year, but the circumstances resulting from a preferential rate of duty on colonial wines might largely increase this loss.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Isle of Thanet): Does my right honourable Friend mean that we ought not to stimulate the importation of wine from the Colonies?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: What I am afraid of is that if colonial wine was to receive preferential treatment wine would be sent from foreign countries to the Colonies so as to be sent into Great Britain at the cheaper duty.

YEOMANRY ADJUTANTS.

MR. CORNWALLIS (Maidstone): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War will he explain why a captain of the Regular Cavalry, who receives 13s. per day Army pay, on being appointed adjutant of a Yeomanry Brigade receives 10s. per day only, while adjutants of Volunteers receive the full pay to which their rank entitles them; and whether the Secretary of State for War can see his way to equalise the salaries of these officers?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: The duties of Yeomanry adjutants differ from those of adjutants of Volunteers, and the Secretary of State does not think it would be desirable to equalise the rates of pay.

LASCAR ACCOMMODATION ON BRITISH SHIPS.

MR. MADDISON (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any complaints or representations have been received by his department from port sanitary authorities, medical officers, or Board of Trade officers, or from any other source, as to the insufficiency of accommodation provided for lascar or other Asiatic seamen on board British ships?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Certain representations have from time to time been made to the Board of Trade by different authorities with respect to the matter to which the honourable Member refers.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): Can we have a copy of these representations laid on the Table of the House?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I do not think it at all expedient, convenient, or desirable that such communications to the Board of Trade should be laid on the Table of the House.

MR. STEADMAN: On behalf of the honourable Member for Plymouth (Mr. MENDEL), I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether any complaints

or representations have been made to his department by port sanitary authorities, medical officers, Board of Trade officers, or from any other source as to the insufficiency of accommodation provided for lascar or other Asiatic seamen on board British ships?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: The only representations on this subject which have been received, so far as I am aware, by my predecessors or by myself, are three in number—namely, one from a medical officer of the Port of London in 1891, another from the Bombay Port Health Officer in 1892, and a third from the Shipwright Surveyor of the Port of London in 1894.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: Can the noble Lord state the nature of the representations? Was the complaint that the accommodation was not sufficient?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: Yes, the first was to the effect, I think, that the accommodation allotted to the lascars was blocked up by chests, and the others were that the space should be increased.

REMOVAL OF THE SWINE REGULATIONS.

MR. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if, in view of the strong representations made to him by the agriculturists of Somerset, he can now see his way to removing or modifying the restrictions on the movement of fat swine intended for slaughter?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. W. H. LONG, Liverpool, West Derby): In view of the very substantial reduction of swine fever which has been effected in Somersetshire, I think the time has come when I should be justified in excluding that county from the operation of the Swine Fever (Movement) Order of 1898, of which complaint has been made. It would be desirable, however, that certain regulations should be made by the Local Authority themselves, and I propose at once to instruct an inspector to communicate with them on this subject in order that we may issue the Revocation Order at an early date.

LOCOMOTIVE BY-LAWS.

MR. HOBHOUSE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board when his department will issue the model by-laws for the guidance of county authorities under the Locomotives Act of last Session?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. H. CHAPLIN, Lincs., Sleaford): Model by-laws on this subject have been prepared, and copies of the draft have been sent to the County Councils Association and the National Traction Engine Owners' Association for their observations. I have only to-day received the reply from the latter. Some points have been raised for consideration, but I hope that the by-laws may be issued at an early date.

P. AND O. STEAMER "NUBIA."

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will state the number of lascar or other Asiatic seamen employed on board the P. and O. steamship "Nubia," on her last voyage, as sailors, firemen, cooks, stewards, and boys; whether he can state the number of superficial and cubic feet of accommodation provided in the forecastles set apart for such persons; and whether such accommodation is in accordance with the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Inquiry shall be made with regard to the points mentioned in the Question, and the result shall be communicated to the honourable Member in due course.

ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE SEAMEN.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that a meeting of Royal Naval Reserve seamen was held at Barry Dock on Monday last; whether he is aware that such seamen complained that they were unable to obtain employment on British ships because they were Britishers; and whether Her Majesty's Government proposes to provide any remedy for such a state of things?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I only last night received from the honourable Member himself a copy of the resolution adopted at the meeting referred to in the Question. The subject shall receive careful consideration and a reply to the memorialists shall be communicated to the honourable Member in due course.

SECTION 210, MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received from the Attorney-General or other law officer of the Crown an opinion as to whether section 210 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, applies to all seamen employed on British registered vessels, regardless as to the port or place where they are engaged?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: No, Sir. There have been consultations on the subject, but we have not yet received the opinion of the law officers.

ARMY PENSIONS AND THE P.O. SAVINGS BANK.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether any decision has yet been arrived at in regard to the proposal to print on Army pension orders a few of the advantages of investment in the Post Office Savings Bank?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: The Secretary of State does not consider it necessary to print any special information in regard to the advantages of investment of the Post Office Savings Bank on the back of the Army pension orders. Since the abolition of military savings banks soldiers have been in the habit of investing their savings in the Post Office Savings Bank, and are familiar with the advantages of so doing.

THE "BRENDA."

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he will state when the Fishery Board cruiser "Brenda" will again be fit for service, and the cost of her repairs?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): I am informed by the Fishery Board that it is expected that the cruiser "Brenda" will again be fit for service in about a week. Her repairs will cost £1,363 10s.

COMMUNICATION ON PASSENGER TRAINS.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any decision has yet been arrived at in regard to the recommendations made by the Departmental Committee in their Report of last June as to the best means of providing communication with the engine driver or guard on passenger trains?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: The Board of Trade have not heard that the Committee of General Managers dealing with this subject has arrived at any conclusion, but they understand that some progress in that direction has been made.

THE LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the importance of passing the London Government Bill through Committee before the Whitsun Recess, he will arrange for the Committee stage of that Bill to be taken on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays in each week, commencing on the 24th instant?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): We propose to begin the discussion on the London Government Bill on Monday, and it would be obviously convenient to carry on the discussion *de die in diem*, with the exception, for the present at least, of Wednesdays, and any

exception we have to make with regard to the Budget. I propose, therefore, to move on Monday—

"That the several stages of the London Government Bill and the Finance Bill have precedence of all Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion on every day on which they are set down on the Order Paper."

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): Will the right honourable Gentleman take into consideration the possibility of morning sittings on Tuesday so as to give private Members an opportunity of moving their Motions between 9 o'clock and midnight? It would not be much inconvenience to the House, while it would be a great boon to private Members.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I suppose that we shall have to debate this question on Monday, therefore I do not think it desirable that we should engage in an informal Debate now across the floor of the House. But, considering the state of public business, the honourable Member will see how desirable it is that adequate opportunity should be given for the discussion of the larger Bill. I propose, probably on Monday, to take the discussion on the Committee with regard to Old-Age Pensions and the Poor Law.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): First thing?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Probably.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (King's Lynn): When will the Second Reading of the Finance Bill be taken?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I must not be understood to give a pledge, but it will probably be desirable to take the Second Reading of the Finance Bill on Monday week.

NAVAL RESERVE TRAINING.

SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is now in a position to state the improved arrangements for training the Naval Reserve at Bristol; and whether it is now decided that a gunboat is to be

attached to the training-hulk "Dædalus" at Bristol, as has been done with H.M.S. "President" in London Docks, for the effective training of Royal Naval Reserve men?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: Orders have been given for H.M.S. "Antelope," 1st class torpedo gunboat, to be commissioned on the 4th May, for employment in training officers and men of the Royal Naval Reserve. Her headquarters will be at Portishead.

UNIVERSITY CHARITIES.

SIR W. FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): I beg to ask the honourable Member for Thirsk, as representing the Charity Commissioners, whether the charities under the management or control of the Universities and Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge were investigated or reported upon either by the Charity Commissioners appointed in 1786, or by those appointed in the early part of the present century known as Lord Brougham's Commissioners; whether such charities are contained in any Digests or printed Reports of the present Commissioners; whether the Charity Commissioners have held any inquiries into any charities of the above description; and, if so, would he state into which, and whether they found them in a satisfactory state; and what number of such charities is in existence, and how many of them have sent up their accounts for the year 1897 and for the year 1898 respectively?

THE PARLIAMENTARY CHARITY COMMISSIONER (Mr. J. GRANT LAWSON, York, N.R., Thirsk): The answer to the first paragraph of the Question is in the negative. So far as the existence of any of these charities was known to the Charity Commissioners at the respective dates of the various Digests or Printed Reports made by the Commissioners they are contained in those documents. The Charity Commissioners have held inquiries into some of the charities in question, but it is impossible within the

limits of the answer to a Question, or, indeed, without great expenditure of labour, involving the examination of files and Reports extending over 45 years, to answer the remainder of the third paragraph of the Question. The Commissioners are not aware what number of these charities may be in existence, and, inasmuch as those of them whose existence is known to the Commissioners are in many instances not separately classified, it is likewise impossible to answer this Question, for the reason stated above. The Commissioners will be ready to furnish, as they have already done in certain cases, such information as they may possess as to any particular charity of the class mentioned which may be brought to their notice.

SIR W. FOSTER: What about the accounts for the years 1897-98?

MR. GRANT LAWSON: We do not know how many such charities are in existence.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK FUND.

SIR H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Savings Bank funds can legally be invested in Indian Government securities or in the debentures of Indian Railways, the principal and interest of which are guaranteed by the Secretary of State for India?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: No, Sir.

SIR H. FOWLER: May I ask whether the right honourable Gentleman is aware that this week the Bank of England issued £1,000,000 3 per cent. debentures of the East India Railway Company, guaranteed by the Secretary of State, principal and interest; that these were issued at something like a few shillings under 101—I think that the average was £100 15s. Does not the right honourable Gentleman think that an investment of that character, guaranteed by the Secretary of State for India, charged on that gigantic institution, the East

India Railway system, and paying 3 per cent., repayable at par, was a better investment for the Savings Bank funds than Consols at a premium of 10 or 11, with a reduction of interest at $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. in three or four years, and the possibility of repayment at par in 1923?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: It is a matter of opinion. The right honourable Gentleman is asking what the law is. The law does not at present permit the investment.

GERMAN SUGAR IMPORTS INTO INDIA.

MR. LAMBERT (Devon, South Molton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, subsequent to the large importations of German sugar into India in the year 1897-8, the average price of sugar in India fell; and, if so, by how much; and whether the German sugar so imported is sold at a greater or at a less price than other imported sugar or than sugar produced locally?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: The falling off in prices during the last three years at Cawnpore (which is the largest market in Upper India) was stated by Sir James Westland at about 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The figures contained in the papers, which will, I hope, be distributed in about a fortnight, appear to bear out this statement. According to the statistics in my possession, German refined sugar appears to fetch about the same price as Indian sugar, and a higher price than other imported sugar.

THE GRANT TO LORD KITCHENER.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): Can the Leader of the House give us any idea when the Vote for Lord Kitchener is likely to be brought on?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: No, Sir, I cannot give any forecast. I promised a week's notice before bringing it on.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY [7TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith), CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, in the Chair.]

(In the Committee.)

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1899-1900.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That a sum, not exceeding £1,211,900, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Staff for Engineer Services, and Expenditure for Royal Engineer Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad (including Purchases), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1900."

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfarshire): The point I wish to raise very briefly is in reference to Vote 10, and the money which has been spent under this head in regard to Wei-hai-Wei. It will be within the recollection of the Committee that it was decided that it was not possible to discuss that aspect of what is being done at Wei-hai-Wei under the Admiralty's Navy Vote. My purpose in rising now is to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he can give us any information as to what the War Office have done in regard to Wei-hai-Wei, and the money which has been spent there. You will find in the Appendix to Vote 10 an amount spent for engineers' surveys for Wei-hai-Wei. I want to ask the honourable Gentleman if he will give what information he can as to this expenditure. In the first place, I am sure it will be of interest to know what instructions were given to those officials who were sent out by the War Office to perform the services paid for under this Vote. In the second place, I should like to know how far the War Office is co-operating with the Admiralty in this matter. Beyond the ordinary difficulties which there must necessarily be in this matter, arising from the joint work of the Admiralty and the War Office with regard to a place of this kind, there is the further difficulty that we do not know how far they have been co-operating in matters

of policy in regard to our position at Wei-hai-Wei. I should be much obliged to the honourable Gentleman if he would tell us what military operations are contemplated there. In a previous Vote money has been taken for the establishment of a Chinese regiment, officered by English officers, to be stationed at Wei-hai-Wei. Now, under this Vote the precise sum mentioned is £215 for surveys, and I have no doubt they are connected with what may be contemplated in regard to the further development of the defences of this new position. Perhaps the honourable Gentleman will tell us what instructions were given to these officers who made these surveys, and what part they are to play in the garrison and defence of this position, and whether the War Office contemplated adding to the expenditure for Wei-hai-Wei. It is very curious that the discussion on Wei-hai-Wei should have taken place under the Navy Estimates, but I may remind the Committee that the sum expended under the Navy Estimates is only £9,000, whereas the sum under Vote 1 of the Army Estimates amounts to £21,000, which is a considerably greater sum than that spent under the Navy Estimates. I should like to put these questions to the honourable Gentleman.

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. J. POWELL-WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): The honourable Member for Forfarshire has been good enough to give me notice that he proposed to raise this point, and he asks me what instructions were given to the men whose pay is represented by this sum of £215 in regard to surveys at Wei-hai-Wei. No doubt the harbour of Wei-hai-Wei will require some protection, but it is quite impossible to say finally what that protection will consist of until we have had a complete survey of the place. The instructions to those who were sent out were simply that they should let us know after a full survey what the ins and outs of the place were. Until we do know exactly what we call "the lay of the land," it is obviously impossible to say what the protection of the place must be. The men are engaged there on a preliminary task, which, when they have fulfilled it, will enable Lord Lansdowne to say, in conjunction with the

First Lord of the Admiralty, what the future of Wei-hai-Wei must be in reference in its defences.

MR. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.): I think we might get a little further information from the Government. It will be within the recollection of the Committee that when the question was raised on the Navy Estimates there were two questions which were asked. One was with regard to making Wei-hai-Wei a secondary naval base, and the other was what the right honourable Gentleman meant by saying that it was also the design of the Government to fortify Wei-hai-Wei sufficiently. When we pressed the First Lord of the Admiralty on this point we were called to order, because it was ruled that it was a War Office question. The statement had been made by the First Lord of the Admiralty, as the representative of the Government, and we were anxious to obtain from him a complete statement as to the future intentions of the Government with regard to Wei-hai-Wei, and the purposes for which the money was to be expended. The First Lord of the Admiralty made a statement to us with regard to establishing a secondary naval base, into which he went at considerable detail. We should like to have that statement supplemented either by the representative of the War Office or by the First Lord of the Admiralty himself as to what he meant by having it fortified sufficiently, because I understand from the Papers which have been published in the China Blue Book, in which the instructions of those gentlemen whose salaries we now have before us are contained, that they will practically report upon any scheme of fortifications which may come under the consideration of the Government. I think we might have a statement from the First Lord of the Admiralty with regard to Wei-hai-Wei. Assuming, as I do, that with regard to the future of Wei-hai-Wei, military considerations and military works are to be absolutely subsidiary to naval considerations and naval works, and even though the disposition of the forces in Wei-hai-Wei is not absolutely and exclusively under the control of the Navy, we still want some assurance that any work done there will be subsidiary to the naval works. If the right honourable Gentleman will

give us some further information upon these points we shall be fully in possession of the views of the Government.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I think it is extremely unfair of the honourable Member opposite to ask what are the views and intentions of the Government in regard to Wei-hai-Wei, because it is quite clear that they do not know. These men, including a draughtsman and a foreman, have been sent out to Wei-hai-Wei in order to enable them to know. They have been sent out, as the honourable Gentleman the Financial Secretary has informed the House, to find out the lay of the land. That means that they are sent out, first of all, to see whether Wei-hai-Wei is very valuable as a station, and whether it is to be made a military station or not. I take it that there can be no other explanation to that point. The Financial Secretary has indicated clearly that, so far, he has not the slightest idea what the War Office, for its part, is going to do with Wei-hai-Wei. I think the First Lord of the Admiralty did give us a distinct notion as to what the Admiralty proposed to do, so far as the Member for York would allow them to do. But what we want to know is what the War Office is doing there at all. Are our soldiers or our sailors there now to defend it?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (MR. G. J. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): There are no soldiers there.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: It does seem to me that when this matter was primarily taken in hand, as it is a strategical question, a Committee should have instructed the War Office upon the question. It is quite clear that the Financial Secretary has had no instructions, but he is waiting for the report of these two men. I have one other question to ask in regard to this Vote, and that is with regard to the Scilly Isles. They constitute a most important naval station, very much more important than Wei-hai-Wei. We have an item here for the survey of this place for the erection of ports in the Scilly Isles, which I deprecate very strongly. I think the War Office is entirely out of place in the Scilly Isles. To summarise what I have said, I should like the

Financial Secretary for War to tell us what he proposes to do there, and I should like to ask him what mischief he is up to in the Scilly Isles, and whether he is contemplating the erection of any fortifications in those islands, and, if so, whether he will not reconsider his position and repent of his misdeeds?

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Stafford, Lichfield): I want to remind the Committee that when these land works were discussed, the noble Lord the Member for York said Wei-hai-Wei would want one or two forts, and now we have got nothing about those forts. These two people have gone out to survey, and they must have orders as to what sort of fortifications they are to survey for. They must have some sort of idea given them, and I should like the First Lord of the Admiralty, as representing the Committee of Defence, to give us some information on this point. According to the Financial Secretary's statement, it is clear that the Committee of Defence have got some distinct ideas as to what the Army was to do and what the Navy is to do. I should like to ask if it is the opinion of the Committee of Defence that it is necessary to have two separate establishments there, because that is what many of us think is an extravagant system. We think that there should be no Army staff there, and what soldiers there are there should be under the command of the Admiralty.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: The question of Wei-hai-Wei has been considered and is being considered, I may say, at this moment by the Cabinet Committee of Defence of the Admiralty. Both the Army proposals and the Navy proposals have been before that Committee, and it is that Committee which is at present investigating the subject. There have been very full reports sent home from Wei-hai-Wei by Colonel Lewis, who was sent out to report on the question of the defences of that place. Colonel Lewis acted together with the naval authorities there. There was perfect community of action between them, and he sent home a very full and able report with reference to the defences; and these two gentlemen, whose salaries are

now in the Army Estimates, are, if I may say so, simply filling up the details of the survey, the general features of which have been communicated to the Government, and are in the hands of the Government, and are being considered at the present moment. We have substantially in our possession the means of forming a judgment on the necessary fortifications of Wei-hai-Wei. That is a subject which is now being considered by the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, who are at present engaged on the question of what ought to be the size of the garrison to be sent to the island, and how it ought to be composed. There is no uncertainty in the views of the Government as regards our ultimate aim. Of course, we must decide the details according to such information as we are able to collect. The general idea is this—that Wei-hai-Wei is to be a secondary naval base, and that it is to be fortified so far as will put it into a position to enable it to defend itself, but not to fortify it to that point which will make it a rallying place at which ships may take refuge. The fortifications will be of a comparatively simple kind. We have already the general idea as to the number of guns and where they are to be placed, but we are unable at present to commit ourselves to any final propositions. I am sure the House would not wish to hurry us into any decision in regard to this question. We shall act on the fullest possible information. My honourable Friend behind me is not quite correct when he says we do not know what we are doing.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I meant the War Office.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: In this matter we are one. I make myself responsible for all that has been done both by the War Office and by the Admiralty, as no doubt my noble Friend Lord Lansdowne is likewise prepared to be responsible for the joint action of the War Office and the Admiralty. It is astonishing how difficult it is to persuade the House of Commons that this community of action exists. I pledge myself to this, that Lord Lansdowne and I are in constant communication on all matters where the Army and Navy are jointly concerned.

Mr. Bowles.

I hope that I have satisfied my honourable Friend and other honourable Members on this matter. We have not acted in the dark; but, on the other hand, we have not got possession of sufficient details as would justify us in giving any final proposals with regard to the expenditure which will be incurred.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I think the position taken up by the right honourable Gentleman is perfectly intelligible and perfectly proper. The main grounds of the proposal are quite determined, but the Government still lack the detail necessary to complete the scheme. But, at the same time, it seems to me that the right honourable Gentleman must have a little mercy on the House of Commons, because we are engaged in the agreeable task of voting the money for these purposes, and we are therefore naturally anxious to know as much as possible about the intentions of the Government, and when we endeavoured to get this information on the Navy Estimates we were told it was out of order to speak on anything affecting the Army alone. The Chinese regiment will, I presume, be quartered at Wei-hai-Wei. I should like to know a little more about that Chinese regiment. When we passed the Vote for this regiment I understood that it was to be quartered at Wei-hai-Wei. Is that regiment to be used for manning the fortifications of Wei-hai-Wei, or will it be a mobile regiment to be used for other military purposes? I do not think that has been made quite clear. There are a good many people who think that if this is to be a secondary naval base the defence of it would be better left in the hands of the Navy itself. I confess to sharing that view to a very large extent, not only in this case, but in others. I should like to know whether the Chinese regiment is to be employed in manning the fortifications?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: That is the idea; it will be utilised in that way to a certain extent. The question of the composition of the garrison is now engaging our special attention, and the number of native levies to be associated with a certain number of British troops is just one of the questions on which we are now endeavouring to arrive at a decision. There is no doubt that a certain portion of the

regiment would be employed for the defence of Wei-hai-Wei.

MR. BUCHANAN: Will the right honourable Gentleman answer the other question? He stated that there would be a certain amount of money asked for for the erection of works in Wei-hai-Wei under the New Barracks Loans Bill. Will he say when the Naval Works Bill is likely to be introduced?

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: I cannot answer the last question, but the honourable Member is right in supposing that the charge for the barracks will be on the Barracks Loans Bill. With regard to the question of the honourable Member for King's Lynn in reference to the Scilly Isles, I am not aware that there is any charge with regard to those islands in this Vote. He is quite right in saying that the works there are proceeding, but they are being done under the Military Works Act.

LORD C. BERESFORD (York): I should like to ask my right honourable Friend how long he thinks the survey will take, and if, when the result of that survey is sent home to the Committee of Defence, the works at Wei-hai-Wei would at once be put in hand. When I was out there the German Admiral made a very curious remark to me. He said—

"You English are the most extraordinary people. Three ports have been taken from China. One is Port Arthur, taken by the Russians; another Kiaochau, taken by the Germans, and the third Wei-hai-Wei, taken by the British. The Russians are working with very great activity to fortify their fort, the Germans are working with great industry in making a parade ground, and you are employed with great industry in making a cricket ground."

I hope my right honourable Friend will be able to tell the Committee that directly the survey is fully reported on by the two Services this port will be put in the position promised, that of a secondary naval base.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: If we do less and proceed more leisurely at Wei-hai-Wei than the Russians and the Germans respectively at Port Arthur and Kiaochau, it is that to the Russians Port Arthur is their Hong Kong, as Kiaochau is the Hong

Kong of the Germans. Wei-hai-Wei is not our principal base. It is not a base on which we intend to rely for the protection of our Fleet; it is accessory, as I have endeavoured to point out, and therefore there is not the same cause for any feverish haste in fortifying Wei-hai-Wei. On the other hand, I may say we need not wait for the details filling up the general survey already in our possession. We have, I think, before us almost sufficient information in the main to enable us to arrive at a decision with reference to the fortifications and barracks that may be necessary. No further delay will occur, and I think, without having to take any further surveys, we shall soon be able, upon the information that will be in our hands, to begin the fortifications and other necessary works in the Navy Estimates as well as those under the Army Barracks Bill. I hope that my noble Friend will be satisfied with my answer.

LORD C. BERESFORD: We shall not have to wait for next year's Estimates?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: No, Sir, only till the Army Barracks Bill is introduced this year.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I desire to know with reference to the survey which was promised last year as to the works on the Clyde, whether any sum will be voted for that purpose. The matter was brought before the attention of the War Office over twelve months ago, and it was then said it was undesirable to make a statement upon the question. I should like to know what has been done in the matter.

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** The question of the defence of the English ports is one which is under the consideration of those military and naval experts who are considering the whole question of the defence of our mercantile ports with a view to selecting those cases which they consider to be the most urgent. I understand that in the opinion of these military and naval experts several cases other than the one which the honourable Member mentions are considered to be more urgent and must have precedence. It is impossible to do them all at once, and we must take them in some

order. I think the honourable Member will agree that those which are most urgent ought to be dealt with at once, and those which are less urgent ought to be postponed. Therefore, there is no provision for the Clyde works in this year's Estimate, and the reason is because in the opinion of those responsible it is not so urgent as other cases which are put forward.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That Item D (Incidental Expenses of the War Department, Lands, and Property), be reduced by £100, in respect of the Expenses of 'Sewage Farm, Aldershot.'"—(Mr. Jeffreys.)

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, N.): I now propose to move the reduction of £100 of the sum of £13,200 put down for the sewage farm at Aldershot. I do not see any details about the work, and I shall ask the Financial Secretary if he will explain how much has been spent upon this sewage farm. What I want to call the attention of the Committee to is, that under the present management of the sewage farm—and I do not deny that the officer in charge manages it very well indeed—it is proposed that the milk produced on this farm should be supplied to the soldiers at Aldershot. I protest against that, and the people at Aldershot protest as well, because when we hear of so many diseases being conveyed through milk I think that it is necessary that the milk supply should be absolutely pure. Now, first of all, I understand that this farm was let, but it was carried on so badly that the War Office determined to take it into their own hands. It is now being carried on under the superintendence of the War Office and the military authorities at Aldershot, and they have a distinguished colonel at the head of this sewage farm, and no doubt this gentleman carries on the farm very well indeed. Now, the farm is carried on entirely as a sewage farm, and I do not think it is the sort of place which should be turned into cultivated land. Now, from the crops grown on that farm cows are kept, and milk is supplied to the troops. I should just like to mention to the Committee what I have just heard. I have learned that the medical officer of health at Aldershot

First Lord of the Admiralty.

reported against the dairy being registered there two years ago, on the ground that the sewage farm was impregnated with germs of disease. That is to say, the authorities would not allow this filth to be sold to the civilians, but notwithstanding that the sale of this milk was stopped two years ago, when my right honourable Friend was the Under Secretary of State for War, it is now proposed to commence this sale again. I have here the District Orders, and they say—

“On and after 25th April, the Camp Farm will distribute pure milk at 3d. per quart to masses, officers' quarters, etc.”

Now, I contend that what is not good enough for civilians is not good enough for the troops quartered at Aldershot, and I am very much impressed with this, because here are the instructions for the guidance of dairymen and cowkeepers with the view to the prevention of infectious diseases. It says—

“Typhoid fever, scarlet fever, and diphtheria may have their origin in dairies, and be produced in the following ways.”

One of the paragraphs (No. 4) lays down—

“Cows suffering from disease, or lying about on sewage farms.”

They particularly mention the fact that a sewage farm is an unhealthy place for cows to be in. I should also like to tell the Financial Secretary that there was a public meeting of the Aldershot, Farnborough, and District Dairymen's and Cowkeepers' Association held on Wednesday, 22nd March 1899, at the Wellington Hotel, Aldershot, to protest against the establishment of the dairy by the War Office on the Government sewage farm at Aldershot for the supply of milk to the military hospitals, prison, troops, etc., at that station. At that meeting it was proposed, seconded, and carried unanimously—

“That this meeting has learned with the gravest concern of the intention of the War Office to open a dairy on the Government sewage farm at Aldershot.”

There is a great feeling about this question in the country as to pure milk, and it is not a matter to be easily slurred over, because there is no doubt that a great many diseases arise from milk.

and we in the country are most particular, not only with regard to the dairy, but with regard to the pasture on which the cows feed, and it is absurd to say that you can get pure milk from cows which are kept upon a sewage farm. I admit that the military authorities ought to do the best they can to make the farm pay, but yet I think they might do it in a more legitimate way than keeping a dairy upon it. We all know that land saturated with sewage produces enormous crops, and this might be used for feeding purposes. I do not think, however, that the crops from the sewage farm ought to feed the cows which produce the milk. I should not do it on my own farms, and I do not think anyone in this House would like to drink the milk which comes from that farm. I would impress upon the Financial Secretary that it is very important that soldiers should not be treated in this way. Surely a great country like this, which spends so many millions on the Army, can afford to lose a very small amount upon a farm. It does seem a reasonable thing that this should be done, because it has been done before by the War Office, and the sale of the milk from this contaminated farm should be stopped.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I think it has been held by sanitary authorities that the disinfecting power of land and soil is so great that it destroys the germs of disease. In the neighbourhood of large towns, as this farm may be, it is possible to so saturate the ground with sewage that it may not be altogether free from disease. I think it is a strong order for the War Office to sanction the starting of this dairy farm in opposition to the wishes of the people of the district. I would not attach so much importance to the opinion of the inhabitants themselves, because we know the whole question of the diseases caused by bacilli is very much in the air just now, and we may have to consider this question in accordance with the most recent developments of sanitary science. But when I hear the medical officer of health, whom we know is an able man, has protested against this place, the position is a very different one, and I think it is a strong order that the military authorities should start dairies on this land

in defiance of the sanitary authority. What I consider the military authorities ought to do is to send an expert from the Local Government Board. We have here the best experts in the world, and it would be a good thing for the War Office to have an opinion of that kind from some medical officer of high and undoubted sanitary experience and authority, who should be sent out to report upon this farm.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I should like, in a few words, to support my honourable Friend the Member for North Hants in the very reasonable request he makes from the Financial Secretary. The last Report on this matter was in 1897, and the authorities then stated that diseases were on the increase, particularly in regard to scarlet fever. This was denied by the representative of the War Office in this House. I cannot help thinking that it is not proper and is not an economical matter to supply a camp of soldiers with milk from this sewage farm, because the health of our soldiers is of the greatest importance. I hope that, as the experiment has been tried before and failed, the War Office will pay some attention to the complaint of my honourable Friend.

*GENERAL RUSSELL (Cheltenham): In my opinion this farm would be much better employed if it was devoted to the production of forage rather than a dairy farm. As a large farmer I say that, in my opinion, it is a great mistake to sell milk coming from the sewage farm.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport): I maintain that we ought to treat our soldiers just the same as we should treat ourselves in this matter. I will undertake to say that there is not a single Member of this House who, upon any consideration, would allow a single pint of milk from a sewage farm to enter his own house. I know something of sewage farms in connection with Birmingham and Wolverhampton, and all I say is that I would as soon drink rank poison as the milk which comes from those farms. I think it is very hard lines that the soldier should be supplied with this milk.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: As the case of Birmingham has been referred

Dr. Farquharson.

to, perhaps I may be allowed to say that there is in that city on the sewage farm a very considerable dairy, and a very large amount of milk coming from that dairy is supplied to the residents in Birmingham, who enjoy the felicity of being almost the most healthy population in the kingdom.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY: Does the honourable Gentleman use that milk himself?

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: Yes, I do.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Boiled?

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: There are two points which the Committee should bear in mind. In the first place, the £1,900 which we take with this year's Estimate is to complete a larger sum for the purpose of the subsoil drainage of the Aldershot farm, which the House assented to two years ago. I think my honourable Friend the Member for Basingstoke has forgotten that, in answer to a Question which he put to me on the subject the other day, I stated, on behalf of Lord Lansdowne, that, bowing to the feeling that existed in some quarters of the House as to the desirability of not using milk from this farm for the purpose of supplying the troops, he would cause a special expert inquiry to be made into the matter, and I promised, in his behalf, that we should be absolutely guided by the result of that inquiry. But if I am called upon to defend what has been hitherto done, then I have to say that anything that has been done upon this question has been done in pursuance of the opinion of the Army Sanitary Committee, which, as my honourable Friend the Member for Aberdeenshire is aware, consists of gentlemen who are perfectly qualified to form an opinion upon a matter of this kind. Something has been said about the former tenant and the supply having been stopped on the farm. I think that was in 1896, but the reason for that action was that the farm was grossly mismanaged and allowed to get into a very bad state, and the milk supplied from the farm was necessarily affected. Subsequently the farm was taken over by the War Office authorities, and the Army Sanitary Committee have since that time expressed

their opinion on the subject in these words—

"That the supply of milk from this farm and dairy produce may properly be sold to the troops."

An eminent professor from the Army Medical School has also reported in the following words—

"That the dairy on the farm is in perfect sanitary condition, that the cows are clean and healthy, and that there is an abundant supply of pure water."

Then the Report goes on to say—

"I should not have the smallest hesitation myself in using the milk from this farm, and I consider the consumers are fortunate in being able to obtain such a good supply of milk."

It was under those conditions that the medical officer at Aldershot allowed this milk to be supplied to the troops. What my honourable Friend the Member for Aberdeenshire said is perfectly true, because medical opinion upon this question is constantly changing. However, looking to the circumstances of this farm, if, after further inquiry, the Secretary of State finds that this farm ought not to be used as a milk producing farm, then the supply of milk will be stopped and the conditions changed.

MR. JEFFREYS: I should like to ask my honourable Friend a further question upon this point. In the District Orders issued this month it states that the manager of the Camp Farm is prepared to deliver supplies of milk to the troops after the 25th April. Now I should like to ask if the honourable Gentleman will take care that this milk is not supplied until after the promised inquiry has taken place. If the milk is to be supplied next Monday, and the Secretary of State is going to have this inquiry, which may take a long time, then this regiment may be half-poisoned in the meantime. It is all very well for the honourable Gentleman to mention the case of the sewage farm at Birmingham, but he must remember that at Aldershot it is a totally different soil. This is a comparatively small farm, and the district around it has grown to enormous dimensions, so much so that the authorities have tried to buy another farm in order to effectively dispose of their sewage. This farm is too small for the

amount of sewage which comes upon it, and consequently it is perfectly saturated. All I say is that it is worth while taking great care that the chances of contamination shall not come from such a small matter as this.

DR. FARQUHARSON: Perhaps my honourable Friend will also inform the House whether the medical officer has given any opinion upon it. Can he inform us what is the opinion of the principal medical officer?

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: The medical officer at Aldershot has reported in favour of this supply. I will undertake to say that nothing shall be done until we have heard the result of the inquiry, and until the Secretary of State is satisfied.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): There is another way to look at this matter, and it is from a civilian point of view. We have been trying to do all we can to make the Army popular, and if it is reported amongst the soldiers' friends and relations that the troops are given milk which is not good, and which comes from an unsatisfactory source, we cannot hope to popularise the Army. I would suggest that some of the milk should be sent up to the Secretary of State for his own use.

MR. PIRIE: I would suggest that the inquiry should be a thoroughly impartial one, because we have two opinions which are both different. The civilian medical officer represents the ratepayers, and the military medical officer represents the War Office; therefore it is important that the inquiry should be a thoroughly impartial one, and should be conducted by a man whose opinion will deserve every confidence.

*MR. WEIR: May I ask upon what conditions the previous tenant held the farm?

MR. SEELY (Lincoln): I think the War Office would be much wiser if they did not get the milk from a sewage farm at Aldershot at all. There is plenty of milk to be got from farms which are not sewage farms, and nobody can ever make me believe that milk from sewage farms is free from disease germs. Any one who has any knowledge of farming

knows that dairy farming in particular requires careful personal supervision, and economically it is most unwise for a public body to start dairy farming. It would be better to give up providing this milk, and not run what is an obvious risk both to the troops and to the children of the married men, for there is no necessity to have this milk supply at all. I hope the Financial Secretary to the War Office will reconsider the whole question, and decide to give up the supply altogether. He says he drinks milk from a sewage farm at Birmingham, but no doubt it has been boiled, and that is a necessary precaution. It would be far better to grow forage on the farm.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER: I believe the milk from this farm is being sold at the present time. I have known this farm for about 20 years, although I have not seen it for the last year or two. For about 15 years I have been within smelling distance of it, and I can assure the House that it smells at a considerable distance. I should think that any milk from that farm, whether produced there or not, would not be a fit beverage for children.

*MR. WEIR: I understand that this farm has been in operation for about 20 years, and you are now asking for £13,500 for working expenses. I understand that the revenue from this farm is about £750 a year, but we have no details as to how much of this £13,500 is required to carry on the sewage farm at Aldershot. I think the War Office should give some detailed account of this expenditure; no body of shareholders in a public company would allow an account of this kind to pass unnoticed. I think the War Office should conduct this work on business lines, and give us some explanation of the details.

MAJOR RASCH: I do not know whether the War Office is going to stop the sale of this milk or not in the meantime, but I suggest that the War Office should drink this milk themselves if they are not going to stop the supply. If the War Office would only use it themselves, it might lead to greater economy.

MR. JEFFREYS: If my honourable Friend will say that until after the inquiry he will not allow this milk to be

Mr. Seely.

supplied, then I beg to withdraw my Amendment.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: I will undertake that the issue of the milk shall not be extended until after the inquiry which Lord Lansdowne is preparing to institute.

MR. JEFFREYS: The General Order says that it is to be supplied on and after the 25th April. If the honourable Gentleman will undertake to say that no general delivery of the milk to the troops shall take place pending this inquiry I will withdraw my Amendment.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I usually assume a habit of supporting the War Office, but I must admit that I think there is a great deal of force in the contention that dairy produce is not the only thing for which this farm could be used. It could be used for forage, and it would be well to avert the mere suspicion of anything being sold which is prejudicial to the health of the troops or of the community. Even supposing that a small preponderance of experts could be found to say that there is no danger, it would still be better to avoid suspicion in such a matter. I hope that the Financial Secretary will be able to say that unless the expert opinion which Lord Lansdowne receives is overwhelmingly strong in the opposite direction, and against the suggestion of danger, the farm would not be used for dairy purposes. It will put an end to the semblance of fear if he will not prosecute the plan of using the farm for dairy purposes.

COLONEL WELBY (Taunton): It is very easy to remedy this state of things. These cows can be removed and put on other farms—for there are plenty of pasture grounds—or else they could be sold. I do think that it is rather unfortunate that the War Office have placed themselves in the position of supplying this milk, and I think they ought to take care that no milk from this sewage farm is supplied to the soldiers. The interests of recruiting and the health of the men themselves is what the Committee should consider.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: I quite recognise that there are questions con-

nected with this subject other than mere economic considerations. With regard to what has been said by the right honourable Gentleman opposite as to the desirability of doing nothing which is open to suspicion, I have not the slightest objection to meet his appeal. An expert will be called in, and if his report casts any suspicion or doubt upon this milk supply; if it traverses the reports of the other experts upon whose advice it is now controlled, and by which the Secretary of State is now guided, the production of milk will be abandoned, and the farm will be put to other uses. At the present time the Secretary of State is in this position: he is advised by those whose business it is to acquaint themselves with these matters that there is no danger whatever. There are a large number of farms of a similar character throughout the United Kingdom producing milk, and no injury to health has resulted. But still, if the experts whom the Secretary of State consults tells him that the supply is not absolutely safe, the Committee may rest assured that the system will be abandoned.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY: And until the report is received, the supply will be abandoned?

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** No.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somerset, Wellington): Unless the Government will give an undertaking that the milk is not to be sold until the report has been received, I think we should press this Amendment.

***MR. WEIR:** Is there a Motion before the Committee?

MR. JEFFREYS: I moved the reduction by £100.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I beg the honourable Member's pardon, but he did not move.

MR. JEFFREYS: I moved at the commencement of my remarks.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: The honourable Member rose to move, but he did not do so.

MR. JEFFREYS: Then I will undertake not to move if the honourable

Gentleman will promise not to supply this milk until the inquiry has been held. If this undertaking is not given I shall persist in moving the reduction.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): Although I am not responsible for what has taken place, I do appeal to my honourable Friend to consider whether it is necessary to divide the Committee after the very distinct promise which has been given by the Financial Secretary.

MR. JEFFREYS: What promise?

MR. BRODRICK: What is complained of by the Member for Basingstoke is that a new departure is to be initiated on Monday next, when the issue of this milk to a certain number of regimental canteens will take place. My honourable Friend has undertaken that no new departure shall take place; but what he is asked to promise is that, until an investigation has been made, and in spite of what has been done hitherto, the milk shall not be sold anywhere. That means that it must be destroyed, and that is rather a strong order. The milk must be disposed of somewhere, and it will be unreasonable to ask the Secretary of State not to allow it. I think my honourable Friend has gone as far as he can be asked to go in saying that there shall be no extension whatever of the present arrangements; that the system shall be overhauled; and that if any shadow of doubt is thrown on the purity of the milk, its supply will be stopped altogether.

MR. JEFFREYS: After this very strong expression of opinion on both sides of the House, I hope the War Office will not persevere in this course. Of course, the milk must be disposed of in some way, and if the Order relating to Monday next is to be cancelled, I will withdraw my Amendment.

DR. FARQUHARSON: I would suggest that, if the milk could not be withdrawn altogether, the War Office shall give an undertaking that it shall not be issued unless it is sterilised or boiled.

MR. ELLIOT (Durham): I venture to think that to persist in this Amendment is a very doubtful step in-

deed to take. Having pointed out the danger of the circumstances that exist to the Government themselves, they have stated that the matter is being inquired into, and that they will abide by the inquiry. Therefore I think that under the circumstances we should be doing a very unwise thing in not leaving the full responsibility for effective action with those upon whom the responsibility rests for the moment.

MR. SEELY: I think the Financial Secretary has not quite realised what the issue is. There can be no objection to private persons buying this milk if they choose to do so. But it is a different thing to issue it to the troops, who cannot refuse to drink it and cannot ask for other milk.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: My honourable Friend is under a misapprehension. The milk is not issued to the troops, but to the canteens, and they can refuse it at any moment.

MR. SEELY: It stated in the Order that it was to be issued to the troops. I think the Government would be far wiser in giving up the business altogether. I think the War Office might show rather more sense in this matter than they generally do, and not sell milk to the troops from a sewage farm. Perhaps enough has been said now to make it unnecessary to press it to a Division.

MR. PIRIE: It is not right to say that the canteens are free agents in this matter. How could they make a change when they know that the commanding officer is in favour of this milk? I should like a promise that this inquiry will be made within a certain time. I desire to emphasise the statement that the milk, if sold to the public, should be sterilised or boiled before it leaves the sewage farm. I do not think that there will be any necessity to go to a Division.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: It has been said that I do not realise the importance of this question. That honourable Gentlemen do not like the idea of milk coming from a sewage farm I have

Mr. Elliot.

at this particular moment got very much in my mind. I will promise that this inquiry to be instituted by the Secretary of State shall take place next week.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

Motion made, and Question put—

"That Item D be reduced by £50, in respect of the Expenses of 'Sewage Farm, Aldershot.'"—(*Mr. Weir.*)

*MR. WEIR: I beg to move the reduction as a protest against this system of lumping these accounts together. There is a sum of £750 derived from two sewage farms, one at Aldershot, and one at Sandhurst. I asked earlier in the evening upon what conditions this sewage farm at Aldershot was let, and I received no answer.

Amendment negatived.

Vote agreed to.

MR. BUCHANAN: There is an item here with regard to Piershill Barracks to which I desire to call attention. This also raises the question of a sewage farm, but it raises it in a different way, and it does not belong to the War Office, but to the City Corporation of Edinburgh. During the past few years there has been a great deal of unhealthiness in these barracks, which are cavalry barracks, close to Edinburgh, and it is a peculiarity of the disease and sickness that generally occurs there that it generally takes one form. Almost invariably those who suffer from sickness are those who are put to live in one side of the barracks, and that side of the barracks is the side nearest to the Edinburgh sewage farm. I understand, too, that the drainage is defective, and between the two the officers and men are being gradually poisoned, or, at any rate, their health is being very seriously injured. I do not know what reply my honourable Friend is going to make to me, and I know that the rate of mortality there has not been so great as in other institutions. If he is going to take that line of argument, I may point out that, as a matter of fact, a large number of both officers and men who have suffered from

blood poisoning in these barracks have been removed and put into private hospitals or in the Royal Infirmary, and there were two cases of soldiers suffering from lead poisoning in which death ensued. There has been a considerable number of cases in which the soldiers have been put upon the sick list, and have seriously suffered in consequence. More than that, I am informed by information which comes from the Edinburgh authorities that in many cases the men who have lived for a long period of time in these barracks have found their general health very much debilitated, and consequently their injuries heal very slowly. I think it is a case in which the War Office ought to take serious steps to put these barracks in a proper state of sanitary repair. If it is found to be the fault of the sewage farm they should put pressure upon the authorities in Edinburgh to get better control over their sewage farm. If, on the other hand, there is found to be good grounds for thinking that the defects are irremediable, then the Government should take steps for the construction of new barracks, or the removal of the regiment to some more sanitary quarters.

*GENERAL RUSSELL: I know of an instance within my own personal knowledge of a friend of mine who suffered from blood poisoning due to the insanitary condition of these barracks. I considered it such a bad case that I wrote direct to Lord Lansdowne, who, with his usual courtesy, ordered an inquiry to be made and sent me a report, which declared that the barracks were in a perfectly sanitary condition. I confess that I attached very little value to the report, but I went down myself to these barracks, and stayed in them. I also consulted some of the officers on the subject. It appears to me, as far as I have been able to ascertain, that the insanitary condition of the barracks is due to the sewage farm in the immediate neighbourhood. They told me that, although the drainage was apparently all right, bad smells come in from the north-west—they are horrible smells—and cause an enormous amount of sickness and general debility. In point of fact, as the honourable Member opposite has said, for some reason or other the barracks are insanitary, and I hope the Financial Secretary will give

us some assurance that the matter will be very carefully inquired into, and, whatever the cause is, that it will be removed.

DR. FARQUHARSON: I am myself in possession of private information from reliable sources in Edinburgh which lead me to absolutely confirm everything which has been said by my honourable and gallant Friend, and if he had not brought this matter before the House, I should have felt it my duty to have done so. The honourable Member has very properly pointed out that you cannot assess the damage to health by the mortality, and what we want to get at is the general condition of the health of the troops, for there is no doubt that in these barracks both the health of officers and men have suffered very materially. The officers complain that when sleeping in their rooms with the windows open they suffer from the sewage gas, for they are so exposed. What we want is a thorough, searching inquiry to be made immediately by an independent medical expert—we happen to have some of the best sanitarians in the country in Edinburgh—or an expert could be sent down from London. There is a certain amount of mystery connected with the prevailing illness amongst the soldiers in these barracks, and there is deterioration gradually going on, and it is not right that any troops should be subjected to conditions which they are not subjected to in any other part of the country.

*COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancs., Ince): I recollect that some time ago the water was considered to be very bad at the Piershill Barracks, and affected the cavalry horses. At least, that was believed to be the cause when I was stationed at Edinburgh.

COLONEL WELBY: Although I am not prepared with any particulars, as one who has been quartered at Piershill, I can speak from experience of the general unhealthiness of those barracks. The sewage farm is a very large one, for I remember passing it on my way to the rifle range. The smells from the sewage farm are very objectionable, and the officers' quarters in particular are bad and unhealthy. In addition to this the barracks are very old-fashioned and insanitary themselves. (The stables

are low, and the men's rooms are over the stables. The whole space of the barracks is too small for the requirements of the modern cavalry regiment. The only jumping-place at these barracks had to be discontinued because a fatal accident happened there. What I would urge is that the War Office should have a full inquiry not only into the sanitary condition of the barracks, but also to see whether it would not be better to sell the site, pull these barracks down, and build new barracks on a more healthy site, where the proper space and all modern improvements for a modern cavalry regiment could be provided. I do not think that it would be at all an unjust favour to Scotland that a proper cavalry barracks should be built on another site. There is one other question with reference to hot water baths. There is a large item down in this Vote for this purpose, and I want to know what barracks these are going to be put into. I should also like to know whether the Financial Secretary is aware that some of the hot water baths were set up and the apparatus put in, not with public money, but with money borrowed, and which really belongs to the soldiers. I wish to ask whether the War Office will make careful inquiry into this matter, and whether it is intended to repay the whole of these loans for baths out of this £25,000.

Put and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That Item N (Barracks), be reduced by £100, in respect of the Piershill Barracks."—
(*Mr. Pirie.*)

MR. PIRIE: This matter of the Piershill Barracks was brought before the House of Commons last year, owing to an accident in the stables. It was my intention to bring up the subject which has been raised by the honourable and gallant Member who has just spoken, namely, the utterly inadequate expenditure on barrack accommodation in Scotland. Now we have received additional evidence from different quarters as to the insanitary state of these barracks. If the Piershill Barracks were situated in England or Ireland, attention would

have been given to them long ago, and they would have been removed from the present site, and it would not have been necessary to make these complaints. The figures with regard to the question of barrack accommodation in the three countries will furnish sufficient reason why these complaints come forward as regards Scotland. From 1892 to 1897 the expenditure on barrack accommodation in the three countries respectively, in round numbers was: England, £2,300,000; Ireland, £600,000, and Scotland, only £35,000. These figures are for a period of five years, but the average per annum for the three countries was: England, £460,000; Ireland, £116,000, and in Scotland, a miserable £7,000. I quite allow that we have comparatively an insignificant garrison as compared with the garrison kept in England and in Ireland, but no one can deny that, even if you take proportionate figures, the expenditure in Scotland ought to be very much higher. The honourable and gallant Member made a very good suggestion that we in Scotland were quite entitled to have another battalion. It is a very desirable suggestion, and I think more attention might have been paid to it. I think the state of Piershill Barracks should have received more consideration. Recruiting in Scotland is falling off, and is it to be wondered at when you have this disgraceful neglect of the troops stationed in Scotland? The amount put down for repairs at the Piershill Barracks is a miserable £3,000, while you are building palaces in London and in Ireland for the accommodation of your soldiers. I see that there is no less than £42,000 put down for the accommodation of the Guards in London, at Gosport £17,000, and in Ireland accommodation is being provided for 300 men at a cost of £78,000. That item alone is more than the average amount allowed for the whole garrison of Scotland for the last seven years. The Financial Secretary, in alluding to the defence works on the Clyde, gave as his reason that the authorities did not think they were so urgent as those which had been set down. That is the same old story. Every place in England and Ireland are more important than Scotland, and unless Scottish Members combine and bring up these matters before the House, we shall never get the justice which we ought to have. It is posi-

Colonel Welby.

tively disgraceful, and I am glad that my honourable Friend the Member for Aberdeenshire has brought up this matter, and I hope the Scottish people will read these figures, and not rest satisfied until justice has been done to our country. For 1898 and 1899 the expenditure on barrack accommodation in England was £560,000; in Ireland, with practically the same population as in Scotland, it was £285,000; and in Scotland it is a miserable £35,000. This state of affairs cannot go on. No wonder the House of Commons is often surprised at the Scottish Members not being satisfied with the present system of Government in Scotland, and demanding Home Rule. These are the sort of things that make us demand Home Rule in Scotland, because we do not receive proper attention. I do not wish to see a very much larger garrison in Scotland, but I do wish to see the garrison there lodged in a proper and a sanitary way. You draw a large proportion of your troops from Scotland, and you attempt to draw them from all sections of the population. Now, if you wish to keep up the strength of these regiments in Scotland, and I do sincerely trust that more attention will be paid to this question in the future. In answer to a question upon this subject, it was said that it was necessary for their proper training that the troops should be sent to the south, because there was no accommodation for the training of large masses of troops in Scotland. I think the honourable and gallant Member for Cheltenham will agree with me that this is not so, and there is no reason why our troops should be sent to undergo their training in England when there are ample facilities in their own country. As I consider that this matter is important, I shall move this reduction on the special question of the Piershill Barracks owing to the negligence which has been displayed in regard to these barracks, and I beg to move the reduction of this Vote by £100. I wish to ask the Financial Secretary two questions. With regard to the proposed convalescent homes for soldiers, I wish to know where the sites are to be. I have heard that one is to be at Brighton, and I want to know what arrangements have been made in regard to it. I wish also to draw attention to the same fault that can be found with regard to the

inadequate accommodation of the garrison at Stirling, and in a certain degree to a small garrison at Aberdeen in my own constituency. We have recently received the Gordon Highlanders, and there is no reason why there should not be accommodation made there for at least half the battalion. I hope that satisfactory answers will be given to these questions.

MR. ELLIOT: I desire to know how it happens that such an important county as Durham is entirely without barracks at all.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: That question cannot be raised now, because a reduction has been moved in reference to the Piershill Barracks.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: On the question of the Piershill Barracks, and the point which has been raised with regard to the sewage farm, I may say that I shall be very glad to make inquiries into the matter, and I shall raise the question as to whether a site of that kind is, after all, desirable to maintain as a place for the housing of troops. The particular charge upon this Estimate is one for £2,600, which is to be expended in reflooring these barracks, and putting the woodwork into proper order. At the present time the barracks are occupied to nothing like their full extent. They are occupied by three squadrons of the 2nd Dragoons. With regard to the argument of the honourable Member for Aberdeen, I confess that I do not altogether follow it in reference to the amount of money spent in Scotland as compared with this country. It seems to amount to this, that it is the duty of the War Office to provide a large expenditure for barracks in Scotland when there are no troops to put into them. His complaint was that a proportionate sum was not spent in Scotland. It may comfort the honourable Member, if I may put it that way, to know that there is a proposal in the Barracks Bill which will shortly be brought before the House for the expenditure of a sum which will not fall far short of £100,000 for the improvement of barrack accommodation in the city of Edinburgh.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): Is all that for Edinburgh?

MR. BUCHANAN: Does that amount include the Piershill Barracks?

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: Yes, probably a large amount of money will be expended there. They are being retained because the Army sanitary authorities have never condemned them. They have always said that the barracks, if not overcrowded, were fit for occupation and suitable as barracks, except for the new point about the sewage farm. I have always understood that they were fit to be occupied by the troops. Then it is stated that disease has broken out, probably owing to the sewage farm, but I find on looking at the statistics that they do not bear out that statement. From the beginning of the present year to the end of last week the only case of zymotic disease recorded is one of scarlet fever, and that is the case of a trooper from Inverness who had only been in the barracks for one day, so that it is perfectly clear that he did not contract the disease in the barracks, but must have brought it in with him. Then there was also one case of diphtheria, but that was the case of a child in the school. When I go back to last year I find that there were six cases of pneumonia, four of them fatal; but I do not think that that disease was due to sewage contamination, or could be contracted in the same way as zymotic diseases. There were also three cases of scarlet fever amongst the men and four among the children. There was an epidemic of measles amongst the children, but that was doubtless part of the general epidemic of measles at the time in Edinburgh. Then there were three cases of diphtheria amongst the children, which were due to some defect in the drains. The drains were attended to and the matter was put right. I think the Committee will agree that, according to these statistics, which I have no doubt are substantially correct, there is no reason whatever to apprehend that the troops will suffer, at any rate from zymotic disease, in Piershill Barracks. Then an honourable Friend behind me thinks that whilst the men are in the barracks they are generally unhealthy, and do not feel well there. Well, Sir, I am perfectly willing to see that further inquiry

is made in view of the vicinity of the sewage farm, and before further expenditure is proposed, beyond what is in this Vote, the whole question of the desirableness of retaining the Piershill site shall be carefully looked into.

MR. BUCHANAN: I am much obliged to the honourable Member for what he has said, but I fear he relies too much upon the statistics of mortality; for I think I stated, when I called attention to the subject, that you cannot gauge the extent of the mischief by the actual number of deaths, but by the health of the men who have occupied the barracks for some years past. I could lay before the honourable Gentleman private statements from medical and other authorities which I am perfectly certain would show that there has been serious illness amongst men, women, and children at the barracks for several years past. I therefore think it is very essential that there should be further inquiry into this matter, including the question of removing the men to more sanitary barracks.

*MR. PIRIE: I am cognisant of the fact that the subject was brought before the Committee last Session, and that a certain amount of attention was given to it. But I hold that a great deal more attention ought to have been given to it by the authorities, and for this reason, Sir, I feel justified in pressing my Motion for a reduction of the Vote.

DR. CLARK: If the Government are determined to put an end to this insanitary condition, which has caused disease and premature death, I do not think my honourable Friend ought to persevere with his Motion. We have it from the Financial Secretary that a Bill will be introduced, proposing to spend £100,000 for the purpose of carrying out the changes that are necessary to make the barracks healthy for the men, women, and children living there, and under the circumstances I doubt the wisdom of the course proposed by my honourable Friend. Next year, perhaps, if they are not carried out, we may divide the House against it. At the same time, I cannot help thinking that a charge ought to have been made 15 or 16 years ago. As far as some of these barracks are concerned, they are not fit for

stabling horses in, much less for housing men, women, and children.

***MR. PIRIE:** As I recognise only too well that the sole way for Scottish or Irish Members to get anything for their country from this House is to work with unanimity, and as my honourable Friend thinks that I should not press my Motion, I beg leave to withdraw it.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

MR. ELLIOT: I rise for the purpose of expressing the desire that the honourable Gentleman the Secretary to the War Office will give his serious attention to the claim of Durham in the matter of barracks. The county of Durham is the source from whence the men of one of the territorial regiments are drawn, but nevertheless the county is without any headquarters or barracks. As a result, the popularity of the regiment in the county is decreasing. If the Vote for barracks cannot be increased so as to provide one for Durham County I would still ask the honourable Gentleman whether, at all events, he cannot bring before the people of the county the existence of the territorial regiment, by occasionally marching that regiment through the county, and in this way keep up its popularity with the source from whence its members are drawn.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

Motion made, and Question put—

"That Item N (Barracks), be reduced by £22,000, for Accommodation for Increased Garrison in South Africa."—(*Mr. Buchanan.*)

MR. BUCHANAN: There is another subject which I should like to bring before the Committee. I think we are at a disadvantage in discussing this Vote, because there are behind it other sums to be asked for barracks with regard to which we have no details. We are also in this position. We do not know how much money is going to be expended in the course of the current year under the Military Works Act. Of course, a great deal of the money under that Act goes for the purpose of barrack accommodation, but a large amount of the

money is asked for upon somewhat imperfect information. Well, Sir, I want to call the attention of the Committee to one item, which, from a financial point of view, is a rather remarkable one, and that is the item under colonial charges for South Africa, viz.—"Complete accommodation for garrison." The total figures put down are £150,200. We have already spent £127,000, so that upon the actual Estimate of the year that sum has never appeared at all. In the Estimate of last year, viz., 1898-1899, and in the Estimate of 1897-98, there was no item for barrack accommodation in South Africa under this Vote. But in the Supplementary Estimate for last year, issued last February, the House was asked for a supplementary sum of £64,000, of which £62,000 was for the accommodation of troops at Natal. The total estimate was £77,000, and Natal was stated to be the only district in which barrack accommodation was to be made. Well, in the Supplementary Estimates, issued in February this year, £50,000 more is asked for "Accommodation for increased garrison in South Africa," and the Estimate has increased from £77,000 to £150,200. But we get no information as to the purpose for which this large sum of money is asked, or as to the reason for increasing it. I do think that the House of Commons ought to be better supplied with information by the officials of the War Office when these Estimates are brought before the Committee. I would call attention to the fact that not only have we got very little information, but we have even less information in the Estimates than we usually have. Hitherto, whenever a subject was entered in the Estimates, we had separate information with regard to the various items. Now, the sums, notwithstanding the fact that the total has largely increased, are lumped together, and absolutely no details are given to the House. I, therefore, hope the Financial Secretary will be able to give us the necessary details, and justify this vast increase of expenditure. I beg to move the reduction of the sum by £22,000.

DR. CLARK: There is one question with reference to this Vote upon which I should like some information. In the first place, is it the case that some of

these barracks on which we are going to spend the proposed sum of money are practically being bought back from the Cape Government? Then they are handed over by the Imperial Government for nothing? Secondly, why has the policy been changed? Why are you building these barracks in which to keep a large Imperial Army in South Africa? Until lately our policy, as far as the Cape Colony was concerned, was to let her defend herself. The Cape Mounted Rifles and the Colonial troops were considered to be quite sufficient for the purpose. Why, then, have you changed that policy? I think we ought to have some information on the subject.

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** Mr. Lowther, the sum of £150,000, to which the honourable Member for Aberdeenshire has referred, included the sum of £50,000 taken in the Supplementary Estimates. On the general question I have to inform the Committee that this sum of £150,000 has been built up piecemeal as necessity arose. Originally, when the troops were sent to South Africa, it was not proposed that the men should remain there any considerable time, nor was it supposed that their numbers would be increased. Accordingly, temporary accommodation only was contemplated. But, as time went on, it was found that other troops, to complete the units out there, were necessary, and the prospect of bringing these forces home again did not present itself at an early date. But the general officer commanding the district from time to time applied to the War Office for authority to house the troops in a way which would protect them from the severity of the climate. There was a very considerable amount of sickness in some of the stations, and the mortality amongst the horses was very severe. This was due to the unsatisfactory nature of the accommodation of the barracks which the troops occupied. It, therefore, became apparent to the Government that a great deal more than was first contemplated was necessary. Sums of money were accordingly supplied to convert the temporary into more permanent accommodation, in which the health and comfort of the troops would be secured, and that is the reason why the sum of £77,000 has grown in the course of time to the amount we have in the Estimate.

Dr. Clark.

I think, however, this may be taken as a final amount, that is to say, assuming there will be no necessity to add to the number of troops and horses. I can assure the Committee that the matter was most carefully looked into from time to time by Lord Lansdowne, and that there was no alternative—looking at the unsatisfactory accommodation for our soldiers there—but to provide them with accommodation of a far better character. With regard to the point raised by the honourable Member opposite (Dr. Clark), I find that the barracks were handed over to the Colony on condition that they should be given back when wanted for the defence of the Colony. Some of them have been given back without payment; others having been devoted to other purposes, cannot be returned; but in these cases an account between the Colony and the United Kingdom has been given. So my honourable Friend may take it that we have not been doing what he supposed we had been doing, i.e., paying for sites which once belonged to us.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I think that a more unsatisfactory statement I have never heard, and I hope my honourable Friend will go to a Division. In listening to the honourable Gentleman's speech, with no figures before us, one would really suppose that this amount covered a period of 20 years. What is the fact? Since the Estimates were before Parliament last year they have increased from £77,000 to £150,000. The honourable Gentleman tells us that it was thought necessary to send more troops to the Cape. Why, I ask, was it thought necessary? If at the beginning of the year it was considered that we had sufficient accommodation for the troops there, and that no further accommodation would be required, why has it been since thought necessary to send out more troops. Of course, I perfectly admit that if you have an enormous army at the Cape, and if you send more troops every year, you must afford them more accommodation. There is accommodation at Wynberg and Ladysmith in Natal, and along the Transvaal border you have established a camp, a sort of miniature Aldershot. Now, who are you doing this against? What enemy do you expect? Do you suppose that any European Power is going to spring a war upon you at the

Cape? Is it to be understood that these proceedings are a menace to President Kruger? Is it supposed that President Kruger is going to invade the Cape or Natal or Rhodesia or any other place held under the British flag? Are we sending these large British garrisons in fear of this? I can see no reason why we should send additional troops there. Now, there are other Colonies—Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, but the defence of these Colonies is paid for by the Colonies themselves. We used to have troops in Canada, but we withdrew them; and in New Zealand, but we know what a mess was made of it there, and the Imperial troops have been withdrawn. We used also to have troops in Australia, but they have been withdrawn from there also. Why, in the name of wonder, are we to have British troops, paid for by British money, at the Cape of Good Hope? What is the distinction that is made between the Cape and the other Colonies? Here we have barracks built in Elizabeth Town; why are we to garrison Elizabeth Town? If a garrison is required there, the Colony itself has got troops which it can use, or if there are not enough Colonial troops, and if the Colony thinks it requires them, it ought to raise its own troops and not throw the cost on us. I believe there is a sort of fortification at Simonstown, and that there are four or five hundred artillery men in the fort. Why can it be said that we must send more troops to man this fortress, which is of no use to us except as part of the route to India? It is quite evident that these additional troops are being sent out for the specific purpose of defending us from some imaginary enemy of Cape Colony and Natal. I believe they are being sent as a menace to President Kruger, and yet nobody dreams for a moment that President Kruger is at all likely to wage an offensive war against our Colonies there. We have heard a great deal about the £30,000 a year which the Cape has voted for a war ship. It seems to me that the Cape gets an exceedingly good bargain by it, and that the Cape ought to give a good deal more than £30,000 a year to balance the cost of the troops we send there when we do not send any troops to the other Colonies. We have a right to ask what the policy is of sending these large forces to the Cape, and I challenge the right honour-

able Gentleman to explain and justify that policy. It is a very doubtful question whether we ought to raise large barracks there if there is an assumption that these garrisons are not to be maintained there for years.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: I said that they would not in all probability soon be withdrawn.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I confess that is very much a distinction without a difference. On the minor point, how are these barracks to be paid for? We are told that these barracks are to be partly paid by us, and partly by the Colonies. We gave up those barracks when we adopted the wise and reasonable policy of not having Imperial troops at the Cape, just as in Canada. At that time it was agreed that if we ever required the barracks again they should be given back to us. But it appears they have not been given back to us, but an account has been put in by which we are to pay for them first, and the Cape Colony is going to pay us back the money. That is an extraordinary system of finance.

*GENERAL RUSSELL: I think that a true policy is being pursued by the Government in South Africa. Honourable Members must be very familiar with the large military preparations which have been made by the Transvaal Republic, and that from their previous history they are capable of the invasion of other territories than their own. Honourable Members must remember the large sum which it cost this country to resist the raid which the Boers made on Bechuanaland. Shortly afterwards they made a raid on Zululand, and they succeeded in having a large part of that country incorporated in their territory. I think under these circumstances the sending of British troops to South Africa is a precautionary measure which is absolutely necessary. Some honourable Members may have Boer sympathies, but I cannot imagine for one moment that those great military preparations in the Transvaal and the enormous amount of money spent on them can be made for purely defensive purposes. Whether they are or not, we must take measures in order to protect our own Colonies against the armed forces. Unless this

Government strongly reinforces the garrisons at the Cape, the Boers might make an attack on Natal or make another raid on Bechuanaland, or on Swaziland, or Zululand. Granting that it was necessary to occupy the frontier of Natal by a sufficient force to keep the Boers in check—I can speak on this question from personal experience—it is absolutely necessary to increase the accommodation for the troops, because a year and a half ago, owing to the want of proper accommodation, an epidemic of typhoid fever broke out. I think the honourable Member for Caithness is under a mistake when he says that the great proportion of the money in this Vote is for barracks which we have already handed over to the Cape. So far as I understand it, this expenditure is for new barracks. I earnestly hope that the honourable Member for Northampton will give his attention to this matter, and if he cannot see that the policy of sending troops to the Cape is an absolute necessity forced on us by the Boers for the protection of our Colonies, at all events he will acknowledge that if the troops are there it is necessary to house them properly.

MR. BUCHANAN: I am sure I agree with my honourable and gallant Friend that the British troops in South Africa should have good sanitary accommodation considering the privations they have to undergo. But the honourable Gentleman the Financial Secretary to the War Office did not answer the question I put to him, and I think he might give us a little more information than he has already done. First of all, in regard to the reply to the honourable Member for Caithness, he rather indicated, as I understood him, that in some cases we were buying back barracks which originally belonged to us, and that the money so paid will be repaid by the Colony. Where does that appear in the Estimates? Can the honourable Gentleman point me to any item in the Estimates where provision of any sort is made for repayment of that money? On page 138 will be found a list of the Colonial contributions towards the Army Estimates, but the Cape Colony does not appear in the list at all as making any contribution towards the Army Estimates. There is an Estimate of £4,000 to be paid by Natal, but nothing that would

represent a repayment by Cape Colony. Then, I should like to ask whether in the Loan Bill, to which I have referred, there is to be any sum asked for increased accommodation for the troops in South Africa? The honourable Gentleman shakes his head, and I am glad. In the Military Works Act of 1897 a sum of £162,000 was asked for accommodation in Cape Colony, and I think Wynberg was mentioned in the Schedule. In the last Report we have had there is no mention of any money being spent, and I should like to know if that money has really been spent in the Colony. I come back to the question which I asked, and which has not been answered, namely, why there was no sum put in the main Estimates of last year for this matter? The right honourable Gentleman says there has been a growing charge, that it was found that we had to send out more troops there, that they must be kept longer than was intended at first, and that we must have proper accommodation for them. But, surely, that might have been foreseen when last year's Estimates were introduced, because in the Supplementary Estimates there was an item introduced in February 1898. Are we to understand that between the time when the main Estimates were proposed for last year and the time the Supplementary Estimates were introduced, the case of urgency was so great that these large sums had to be spent? I say that is a very remarkable fact. It shows that the urgency must have been extremely great, or the foresight on the part of the War Office was very small. Another question which I asked, and which has not been answered, is, Why do we not get more details as to these items? We get less details upon them than even in the Supplementary Estimates. All that is stated is "South Africa: increased accommodation, £150,000." Now, this is one of the largest works provision on this branch of the Vote. If honourable Members would look at the items above and below that large item they will see that for a small work, "£3,500, in West Coast of Africa," we are told what it is for. And in the same way full details are given as to the works in Bermuda. And in Scotland, where the expenditure is only £12,000, there are no less than six items giving the details. Why do we not get some details as to the places in which this money is to be

spent in South Africa? I ask on what barracks and on what works is this £150,000 to be spent? I find that there was some money spent at Wynberg, Williamstown, and Grahamstown, but the total amount, as far as I can make out, was very far from being like £150,000. Surely, the House of Commons, if it is adequate to the discussion of the Estimates, ought to be furnished with more details than at present. It may be that certain works are necessary, and that more sanitary accommodation should be provided for the troops stationed there, but why should we have so many details on the small Votes while on this, the largest Vote of its kind on the Estimates, there are no details?

DR. CLARK: The honourable Gentleman is like all of us, undoubtedly—in the dark. We have had no information, and we are really asking for information in regard to the various details of the expenditure of this £150,000. I know from past experience that some of the barracks mentioned were some years ago handed over to the Cape Colony for nothing, and I know now that you are buying them back. Since then the Government of Cape Colony handed them over to other parties, and we have got to buy them back from the new holders; but I take it that the Cape will pay us back the amount that they themselves received from these new holders. So that we are in a better position than I thought we were. Now, in regard to the policy of these new barracks, I think a great blunder has been committed at Wynberg. Wynberg is 900 miles from the nearest point where this terrible enemy is going to attack us. And Williamstown and Grahamstown will be even further off, for we have the Orange Free State as a buffer between us and the Transvaal, and our troops would have to pass through the Orange Free State or go round all the other way by Natal. So that if you wanted to have these large garrisons to meet this terrible enemy you ought to have had them 700 or 800 miles nearer. In the second place, if you are going to have troops at the Cape, you ought not to have them along the narrow strip of the sea coast, where you will have not the best conditions under which men can live and thrive. The sanitary conditions have been im-

proved immensely, but if you were going to have a camp it should have been formed at a height of from 2,000 feet to 4,000 feet above the sea-level. The huts at Wynberg are the old barracks which were used when we were fighting the Transkei warriors. But now the Transkeis are perfectly quiet, and these former savages have even now European Parliaments. The Cape Colony is quite capable of doing its own work, so that the old reason for having special garrisons in special places has ceased to exist. Now, we are told the reason for these barracks and camps by the honourable and gallant Gentleman opposite. The fact is, the honourable and gallant Gentleman let the cat out of the bag. President Kruger, it is said, is spending money in armaments. I believe that President Kruger has made a very great increase in his regular army; he has actually increased it from 100 to 500! So that you have 50,000 men to overawe that increased army of 500 men! We are told to remember their past history, and that the Boers made a raid into Zululand and other territories, and that we require to have this great force in South Africa to prevent them making fresh raids into British territory, and that the Transvaal was bounded by British territory and by the Orange Free State. The honourable and gallant Gentleman has not accurately stated what did occur in Zululand. After the death of Cetewayo two parties began fighting each other—the Zebbetas and the Assutos—and one of the parties went into the Transvaal to get Transvaallers to come and assist them. The Transvaal Government had no more to do with these Transvaallers going to the help of one party in the native quarrel than the British Government had to do with the British settlers who went to the assistance of the other party—the Zebbetas. So far as Swaziland is concerned, the honourable and gallant Gentleman is entirely mistaken. It is now a portion of the Transvaal, and that has been done by a Convention made and signed between the British and the Transvaal Governments. There was no raid at all into Swaziland, and there was nothing to justify the insinuation that a raid ever did occur. So far as Bechuanaland is concerned, when the unfortunate Transvaal War occurred there was some fighting between Bechuanas

and Zulus. But Bechuanaland was at that time, in no shape or form, even under the sphere of influence of Great Britain, and we had no more to do with the inhabitants there, practically, than we had to do with the condition of things in Central Africa. All you had was fighting between one chief and another, and white men helping them for the purpose of getting cheap farms. Then these men settled down on their farms and began to organise themselves into the Republic of Goschen and the Republic of Stellaland, which we have taken possession of. But there were no boundaries fixed. When we occupied the Transvaal, Bechuanaland was a portion of the Transvaal. The question became of importance really only when we had to get to the North into Rhodesia, and the only way was through the Bechuana country. We acquired that strip of country, and now by Convention with the Transvaal Government the boundaries have been determined. One would have thought that the honourable and gallant Gentleman would have been satisfied with the fact that £100,000 had been spent in Johannesburg in order to get up a rebellion. This demand for an additional £150,000 represents a charge of £1 per head for every man, woman, and child in the Transvaal, in order that we may keep a large force there for the purpose of preventing these terrible people from doing certain things. I only hope the House and the country will be satisfied with the explanation; I, at any rate, am not.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I think my honourable Friend the Member for Northampton has asked some questions which require an answer. There has been a question of taking back barracks and sites of barracks at the Cape. My honourable Friend cannot understand why we should, in this sum we are asked to vote, be paying the Cape authorities for that for which they are to repay us in a few years.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: We are not paying it.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I understand that when the barracks were surrendered they were surrendered on the condition that they should be

given back if required, and now when they are required they have in some cases been applied to other purposes, and will so remain, and other sites or buildings will be substituted for them.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: We get an equivalent.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: In money or in kind? I do not know exactly what the honourable Gentleman means.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: Where the barracks cannot be given back to us in their original state to accommodate the number of troops they originally accommodated, then the Colony will have to pay for them, or provide other barracks for us themselves.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There seems to be a little mystery about it. The main point is really this—the number of troops that we maintain at the Cape has been largely increased. It has run up from 3,300 a few years ago to over 9,000 now. When we had the 3,300 there it was fully expected we should be able to reduce the number, and there were proposals to bring home part even of that comparatively small force. The increase to 9,000 is a serious matter. I suppose it is part of the legacy of the Jameson Raid.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Majuba.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Then the Majuba incident is somewhat late in taking effect, as a considerable interval has elapsed since that time and the present increase. I am not one who would for a moment dispute the discretion and authority of the Government in a matter of that kind. They know what is required by the necessities of the case, and if they come to the House, and on their own responsibility say a large increase of the garrisons at the Cape is necessary in consequence of the condition of affairs there, it would be a strong order for anyone to oppose it. On the other hand, when they propose to build barracks for that larger force, that means there is to be the maintenance of a permanent garrison of that increased size, and that is a complete reversal of the policy which

has been pursued for the last 25 or 30 years. The temporary reinforcement of garrisons is a matter which, for my part, I should not like to take the responsibility of resisting when the occasion arises, unless there is something unusual in the circumstances; but when there is a proposal to build barracks for this force, it means a permanent occupation of the country and a complete departure from the old policy of bringing back troops from the Colonies and leaving the Colonies to contribute more largely to their own defence, which has been followed all over the Empire for the last 30 years.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I had not the advantage of hearing the speech of the honourable Member for Caithness, but I understood that the right honourable Gentleman who last spoke accused the Government of a change of policy because certain barracks were being constructed for the reception of our garrisons. He stated the number of our troops in the Transvaal at 9,000, and I assume that in that he was correct. But is the right honourable Gentleman unaware of the enormous change which has taken place in South Africa within the last few years? Has he forgotten that the Transvaal is now practically an armed camp? Is he aware that they can put into the field a fighting force of from 15,000 to 20,000 men at a very few days' notice? Does he know that Johannesburg and Pretoria are both dominated by an artillery force? I submit that the increase in the forces at the Cape is justified by the attitude of a neighbouring State there, which is not friendly either in policy or in feeling to this country, and that, therefore, we ought to keep strong garrisons in South Africa.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That may justify an increase for a temporary purpose, but when you erect for a great force permanent barracks you cannot think that better relations with the State to which the honourable Member has referred will ever be attained.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Not in the least. The right honourable Gentleman knows that is a mere quibble.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: Order, order! That is not the proper word to use. I hope the honourable Member will withdraw it.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I was not aware that the word "quibble" was unparliamentary, but if it is I will withdraw it immediately. I did not use it in an offensive sense, and I will substitute for it the word "artifice." I will suggest that the statement of the right honourable Gentleman was an "artifice of discussion" which cannot be fairly sustained. Can the right honourable Gentleman give us the smallest evidence that these great armed forces in the Transvaal—a country not friendly to us—are likely to be reduced? When we have any sign of that I think there will be some justification for asking for a diminution of our expenditure upon barracks. But it is evident from what is happening that the policy of this State is not such as is likely to tend to the establishment of what the right honourable Gentleman calls friendly relations between Great Britain and the Transvaal. We were told by the Colonial Secretary that the condition of affairs there was intolerable, and that justice was being denied to our countrymen. We know what the policy of the Transvaal means. It is directed to the establishment of an anti-British independent Republic in the heart of our possessions in South Africa. While that exists—and it cannot be denied that it does exist, for the franchise is being given to foreigners and denied to British subjects, and everything is being done to stifle the power and deny civil rights to British residents in the Transvaal—it surely is impossible for the right honourable Gentleman to say that there is any immediate prospect of more friendly relations being established there, or that it would be safe for the Government to reduce their armed force in South Africa. I hold that it would be most dangerous to attempt any such reduction, and I believe that if there is one expenditure in which the people of this country will support the Government it is the military expenditure necessary to maintain our predominant position in South Africa, where our trade is enormous. I do not think that anyone can reasonably say, in view of the armed and semi-hostile condition of the Transvaal, that a force of 9,000 men

is an excessive one, and I am sure the House of Commons and the country will thoroughly endorse the action of the Government in proposing this Vote.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I do not propose to follow the last speaker in his references to affairs in the Transvaal. He has talked about the feeling which exists between the Transvaal and the Cape, but may I point out to him that in Cape Colony there is the best of feeling at present towards the Transvaal Republic, as is shown by the fact that a majority have been returned at the recent elections specifically on the ground that they are opposed to the raiders against the Transvaal and to the supporters of those raiders in this country? I fail to follow the Financial Secretary in his explanations as to the reasons for this change of policy. I cannot understand why he should pay back this money. It is evident that this Vote does not represent the full amount spent upon barracks. We have been withdrawing garrisons from every other Colony in order to increase the garrison at the Cape, and the result is that a permanent charge of £1,000,000 for that garrison has been added to the burdens of the taxpayer.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I am glad this question has been raised, for I desire to know how the Government justify the maintaining of a force of 9,000 men at the Cape as a permanent force. It is a most expensive arrangement. It will involve a burden of at least £1,000,000 a year. I want to know why such a large garrison is required. I say that this is a monstrous proposal, and the Government are bound to justify their policy to the House before we pass this Vote. Why is a larger garrison required in Cape Colony than in Australia, New Zealand, or Canada? It looks as if the Government are anticipating some great war in South Africa, or as if they are preparing for some secret expedition. During the last two years we have been resisting a large increase in our military expenditure, and we have been told by Ministers again and again, in reply to our protests, that the proposed increase has been absolutely essential to the safety of the Empire. Let the Government defend their present proposal by explaining what is the

motive for the increase of force at the Cape. I believe that this policy is aimed at the Transvaal. I hold that it is a most mischievous policy, and that if we maintain this minatory attitude the only effect will be to increase the feeling of alarm, irritation, and hostility in regard to this country now prevailing in the Transvaal. Under these circumstances, it is our duty to resist in every way we possibly can this attempt to keep up ill-feeling in South Africa.

MR. LOWLES (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I believe if the honourable Member for East Mayo had any knowledge of the history of South Africa and of Australia, he would have seen that his comparison between the two was utterly wrong. He would have known, had he studied the history of South Africa, that there we obtained our position by conquest, and that we have always been surrounded by hostile forces among the Dutch and the native populations, whereas in Australia we have no enemies. These hostile forces in South Africa have operated against us in years gone by, and may operate against us again. It would, therefore, be most unwise for us to weaken our position in that Colony by a single man. The inhabitants there look to the British Government to protect them against possible outrage and against aggression and injustice, and until things there are on a better footing we are bound to support the Government in keeping up our military forces there.

MR. DUNCOMBE (Cumberland, Egremont): I do not think I should be doing my duty to my constituents if I did not say a word of protest against the disgraceful manner in which British subjects have been treated in that part of the world. I hope the Government will not be guided in any way by the remarks of the honourable Member for East Mayo, and that if they do anything, they will increase, rather than decrease, the permanent garrison in South Africa.

MR. DILLON: The remarks of the honourable Member for Haggerston seem to suggest I am entirely ignorant of the history of Australia and the Cape. He is quite in error. His speech confirms me in the opposition I feel bound to give to this extraordinary Vote. The

honourable Member has shown clearly that this enormous garrison is directed against the Boers and the Dutch population generally of Cape Colony.

MR. LOWLES: I beg the honourable Member's pardon. I did not mean to convey anything of the kind. All I said was that there have been Dutch risings in the past history of the Cape.

MR. DILLON: The honourable Member spoke of the Dutch population of Cape Colony, and said we had had a rising of the Dutch, and we might have a rising of them again. Is that the spirit in which to speak of a Colony like this? The honourable Member also said we had won our position there by conquest. We won our position in Canada by conquest; but are we going to use language like that to the French Canadians? We do not maintain any force in Canada.

MR. LOWLES: Canada does itself.

MR. DILLON: It is manifest that on the Benches opposite—whether it be in the minds of the Government or not I cannot say—it is thought that these preparations are made in view not only of a possible conflict with the Transvaal, but a possible conflict with the Dutch population of the Colony, of whom the honourable Member spoke as enemies in the past and possible enemies in the future. Practically, what the honourable Member said was, that we had won this Colony by conquest, and we meant to keep it by force of arms if we were driven to it.

MR. LOWLES: Yes, if necessary

MR. DILLON: If the Government are foolish enough to avow that policy we shall not keep South Africa very long, because the day has gone by when we can keep any self-governing Colony against its will. It is because I believe that this system of shipping out troops to South Africa may lead to a condition of things which will be fraught with ruin to that Colony, and disaster and shame to this country, that I shall resist these large Votes for keeping up the garrisons.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I must beg the Committee not

to continue this somewhat irritating discussion upon the question of South Africa. The honourable Gentleman who has just sat down entirely mistook, I believe, the tenor and the temper of the speech delivered by my honourable Friend behind me upon the subject of our relations with the Colonies. That is my opinion. It is also the opinion of the honourable Gentleman who made the speech, and that, I take it, should carry conviction to those who, no doubt without intending it, misinterpreted the views of my honourable Friend. The idea that these troops in South Africa are there in order to coerce our fellow-subjects in Cape Colony is extravagant and absurd beyond any words that I have at my command adequately to express. No such thought has ever crossed the mind, I imagine, of anybody responsible for the conduct of our Colonial affairs. The Vote that we are on raises the question of the policy of keeping troops in South Africa; but I would venture to point out to the Committee that this is a small Vote, intended for no other purpose than that of keeping in health the troops that we feel ourselves bound to keep there on our responsibility as a Government. That responsibility partly arises, no doubt, out of the necessity of increasing our garrisons at the coaling stations at the Cape, as we have increased our garrisons at other coaling stations, but it has no relation whatever to the internal affairs of South Africa. Part of the increase is due to a possibility that might arise in that region of the world. Nothing is gained by discussing in detail all the conceivable possibilities which might make these troops necessary; and I do not think we could, as a Government, with advantage go into details on the matter. Nor have I ever heard of an executive and responsible Government being asked to go into details on such a matter. Let me say we have no desire to interfere with any man's rights; all we desire there, as elsewhere throughout the world, is to maintain our own. I hope the Committee will now feel that they have discussed this question at sufficient length, and will allow this Vote to be taken.

DR. CLARK: I know something of these people, and I believe that the Dutch in South Africa are among the most loyal portions of Her Majesty's

subjects anywhere in the world. Great Britain could have no firmer friends than President Kruger and the Boers of the Transvaal. They are a conservative people, who have been afraid of their independence being taken away, and all they desire is to be left alone. They will only fight if they are attacked. I am glad to hear that these alarmist objections are unfounded, that this Vote was simply a continuance of the old con-

dition of things, and that there is no intention of doing anything except to defend our own.

Motion made, and Question put—

"That Item N (Barracks) be reduced by £22,000, for accommodation for increased garrison in South Africa."—(Mr. Buchanan.)

The Committee divided:—Ayes 80; Noes 150.—(Division List No. 88.)

AYES.

Allan, Wm. (Gateshead)
Asher, Alexander
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert H.
Atherley-Jones, L.
Austin, Sir J. (Yorkshire)
Austin, M. (Limerick, W.)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. B. (Clackm.)
Billson, Alfred
Bolton, Thos. Dolling
Burt, Thomas
Caldwell, James
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson-
Channing, Francis Allston
Davitt, Michael
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir C.
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Farquharson, Dr. R.
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. M. (Leith)
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Foster, Sir W. (Derby Co.)
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gourley, Sir E. Temperley
Haldane, Richard Burdon
Harrington, Timothy

Hayne, Rt. Hon. C. Seale-
Hazell, Walter
Hutton, A. E. (Morley)
Jacoby, Jas. Alfred
Jones, W. (Carnarvonshire)
Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.
Kinloch, Sir John G. Smyth
Labouchere, Henry
Lambert, George
Lawson, Sir W. (Cumberland)
Leng, Sir John
Lewis, John Herbert
Macaleese, Daniel
McArthur, Wm. (Cornwall)
McDermott, Patrick
McGhee, Richard
McKenna, Reginald
McLeod, John
Maddison, Fred.
Maden, John Henry
Mappin, Sir Fredk. Thorpe
Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
Molloy, Bernard Charles
Moulton, John Fletcher
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Connor, Arthur (Donegal)
Oldroyd, Mark
Pease, J. A. (Northumb.)

Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
Provand, A. Dryburgh
Reckitt, Harold James
Richardson, J. (Durham)
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John Bryn (Elifion)
Roberts, J. H. (Denbighsh.)
Robson, W. Snowdon
Shaw, T. (Hawick Burghs)
Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
Strachey, Edward
Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
Trevelyan, Chas. Philips
Wallace, Robt. (Edinburgh)
Wallace, Robert (Perth)
Warner, T. Courtenay T.
Weir, James Galloway
Whittaker, T. Palmer
Williams, J. Carvell (Notts.)
Wilson, John (Govan)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Mr. Buchanan and Dr.
Clark.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
Allhusen, A. Henry E.
Allsopp, Hon. George
Arrol, Sir William
Ascroft, Robert
Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir E.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. J. FitzRoy
Baird, J. G. Alexander
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
Banbury, Fredk. George
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Barry, Rt. Hn. A. H. Smith (Hunts)
Barry, Sir F. T. (Windsor)
Bartley, George C. T.
Barton, Dunbar Plunket
Bathurst, Hon. A. Benjamin
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Beckett, Ernest William
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Beresford, Lord Charles
Bill, Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bowles, T. G. (King's Lynn)

Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Butcher, John George
Carson, Rt. Hon. Edward
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
Cayzer, Sir Chas. Wm.
Cecil, E. (Hertford, E.)
Cecil, Lord H. (Greenwich)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Charrington, Spencer
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Cooke, C. W. R. (Hereford)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Cornwallis, Fiennes Stanley W.
Cox, Irwin, E. B. (Harrow)
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Denny, Colonel
Dickson-Poynder, Sir J. P.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. D.
Dorington, Sir J. Edward
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers-

Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
Dunn, Sir William
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn E.
Finch, George H.
Finlay, Sir R. Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Fitzgerald, Sir R. Penrose-
Folkestone, Viscount
Foster, Colonel (Lancaster)
Fry, Lewis
Garfit, William
Gedge, Sydney
Giles, Chas. Tyrrell
Goldsworthy, Major-General
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goschen, Geo. J. (Sussex)
Goulding, Edw. Alfred
Greene, H. D. (Shrewsbury)
Greene, W. Raymond- (Camps)
Helder, Augustus
Howard, Joseph
Howorth, Sir Henry Hoyle
Hozier, Hon. J. Henry Cecil
Hutton, J. (Yorks. N.R.)
Jebb, R. Claverhouse

Dr. Clark.

Jessel, Capt. Herbt. Merton
 Johnston, Wm. (Belfast)
 Kenyon, James
 Kenyon-Slaney, Col. Wm.
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawrence, Sir E. Durning-(Corn.)
 Lawrence, W. F. (Liverpool)
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
 Lecky, Rt. Hon. W. E. H.
 Leigh-Bennett, H. Currie
 Loder, Gerald W. Erskine
 Long, Rt. Hon. W. (Liverpool)
 Lopes, H. Yarde Buller
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowles, John
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 McArthur, Charles (Liverpool)
 McCalmont, Col. J. (Antrim, E.)
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Morrell, George Herbert
 Morton, A. H. A. (Deptford)
 Mount, William George
 Murray, Rt. Hon. A. G. (Bute)
 Murray, C. J. (Coventry)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)

Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hon. Sir H. S.
 Orr-Ewing, Chas. Lindsay
 Pease, Herbert P. (Darlington)
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Pilkington, Richard
 Purvis, Robert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Rasch, Major Frederic C.
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
 Robertson, H. (Hackney)
 Rothschild, Hon. Lionel W.
 Round, James
 Royds, Clement Molyneux
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Cheltenham)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyronc)
 Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
 Seton-Karr, Henry
 Sharpe, William E. T.
 Silkebotham, T. H. (Stalybr.)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, J. Parker (Lanarks)
 Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)

Spencer, Ernest
 Stanley, E. J. (Somerset)
 Stanley, H. M. (Lambeth)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stewart Sir Mark J. M. Taggart
 Strutt, Hon. Chas. Hedley
 Sutherland, Sir Thomas
 Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
 Thorburn, Walter
 Tritton, Charles Ernest
 Valentia, Viscount
 Warde, Lieut.-Col. C. E. (Kent)
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (I. of W.)
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Williams, J. Powell (Birm.)
 Wodehouse, Lt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Young, Com. (Berks, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER: I want to point out one rather curious thing that I think comes under this Vote. A considerable amount is voted to the Household Brigades in London, and there are also certain amounts voted for barrack works at Gibraltar; but there is one important thing which is quite a small matter which is not provided for at Gibraltar. There is no accommodation there for officers' wives and families. The result of that is, when any of the officers of the Household Brigade have to go for two or three years' run to Gibraltar they have to be separated from their wives. It is not a question of money, but a question of being unable to obtain houses; the few houses that there are there are occupied by people for their business or private purposes. It is a well-known fact that there is no accommodation for the married officers, and I do hope that the War Office will see their way to give some promise that they will either buy some houses or some land upon which houses can be built, so that officers may have the advantage of having their families with them. And in order to put myself in order, I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £5,000. It is on page 75, "Works, Gibraltar."

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: The honourable Member is under some misapprehension. The item he refers to appears to be War

Department Building and the Main Sewer. It is rather unusual to raise a question on an item to which it has no reference. He can, however, raise the question without moving the reduction, and obtain an answer.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: The matter to which the honourable and gallant Gentleman refers has not been overlooked, and is receiving the consideration of the Secretary of State for War, and if the House in the future will grant the loan referred to, it will be found that that very question is being considered.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER: I quite accept the answer from the honourable Gentleman. I just want to point out before I sit down this one thing, that it really ought not to cost anything at all, because, as I understand, the officers are quite willing to pay for the accommodation if they can get it; unfortunately they are unable to get it.

COLONEL WELBY: Will the Financial Secretary kindly reply to the question which I have put to him?

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: It is impossible to provide at present the sum of £1,000 or £1,200 for that purpose, but as soon as the money is provided for it it shall be carried out.

*MR. WEIR: I wish to call attention to the accommodation for the 3rd Battalion Seaforth Highlanders at Fort

George, and I shall be glad to hear from the honourable Gentleman that in future the battalion will be trained at Dingwall. Arrangements should be made to have this battalion trained in the county town, and I hope that this suggestion will receive the attention of the honourable Gentleman, and that some of this money which is to be spent on barrack accommodation in various parts of Scotland will be devoted to this purpose. There is one other matter which I would refer to before I sit down. A sum of £600 is set aside for improving the water supply and barrack accommodation at Fort George. I do not think that £600 is sufficient.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES:

The honourable Member is now going back to an item which has been passed.

***MR. WEIR:** With regard to the water supply at Fort George, there is an arrangement to take water from a hole in the common about half a mile from the barracks. The parish council is arranging for a supply of pure water from the hills, and I think it would be desirable if the War Office were to combine with the parish council and get good water from the mountains instead of brackish water from this hole in the common. I hope the War Office will take steps to stop the present arrangement, seeing it is not satisfactory.

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** I have already pointed out to the honourable Member that we have had advice which convinced us that a proper supply of water could be had; it is not necessary to go to the hills, which would cost £500 a year. With regard to the other question raised by the honourable Member, I might remind him that it is a good many years since we first raised the question. It was first raised in the time of the late Government, and the right honourable Gentleman then the Secretary of State for War said that it was not desirable to make the change, and that there were military reasons against it. The present Secretary of State for War has come to the same conclusion. The change which the honourable Member desires would entail further building at Dingwall, which would be very expensive, and for which

there is no necessity. The scheme, therefore, has not been gone into.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That a sum, not exceeding £3,425,500, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for Provisions, Forage, and other Supplies, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1900."

***MR. STRACHEY** (Somerset, S.): I desire to ask a question on sub-section B, which refers to forage. On that point I wish to ask the Financial Secretary if he will give me his attention on this question, as he stated two years ago that the Government had impressed upon commanding officers the desirability of purchasing forage from local sources. I want to ask him what has been done in that matter, and also whether he has considered the desirability of stipulating in the contracts given that English and not foreign forage should be supplied. Forage supplied from home sources is very much better, and can be obtained at the same price, regard being had to the quality.

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** The general officers commanding districts who purchase the supplies are under general instructions to buy from local sources so far as they can, but in all these cases there is an element not, perhaps, in the mind of the honourable Member, and that is certainty and regularity of supply. In the interests of the Army it has been found desirable to be quite assured of regular supply, but the forage supplied, whether it is foreign or home grown, is bought by sample, and if the forage is up to that sample we do not inquire too far as to where it was produced. If you were to insist upon a stipulation as to the place of production, and if you were to try to make sure, if the goods were supplied in very large quantities, whether they actually came from the place of origin stipulated for, it would be very difficult to verify. There is no doubt also that the question of supply of forage is after all of very much less importance than is sometimes supposed. The question has been gone into most carefully, and the authorities have

arrived at the conclusion that it is perfectly impossible to lay down any special conditions as to the place of origin. The Secretary of State for War is anxious, so far as it is possible to do so and is consistent with economy, quality, and certainty of supply, that local purchases shall be resorted to. I say that particularly with regard to some Irish stations, where a large proportion of what is bought may be safely reckoned to be home produced. The question of cost also comes in; and quality, of course, is a consideration. It is the duty of the Secretary of State for War to feed Army horses at the least possible expense. And I hope the Committee will agree with me that the element of expense is important when it comes to be considered that the expenditure on forage is always a considerable item.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That Item B (Forage, etc.), be reduced by £100."—(*Mr. Strachey.*)

***MR. STRACHEY:** After the very unsatisfactory reply of the honourable Gentleman I certainly think it is necessary to move a reduction of the Vote. The honourable Gentleman did not attempt to answer my question with reference to the statement made by his colleague, that it was desirable that a stipulation should be put into the contracts that the forage should be home produced. Is it because that when the honourable Gentleman made that statement a Liberal Government was in power, and that he has changed his mind as he crossed the floor of the House? I do not think he has changed his mind, and if attention is called to it he will urge his colleagues to make that stipulation. So far as the honourable Gentleman has told us, his own statement is nothing more than that an instruction has been given to commanding officers that they should so far as possible buy from the local markets. That is not the question. It is whether the War Office should buy from English and Irish sources instead of buying from abroad. Why does he not say it is much easier and much cheaper to buy forage from abroad? It is not an argument we should expect to hear from the Conservative Government, who generally—and

certainly when they are in opposition—complain that the Government are not doing all they can for the British producer. Now it is the turn of the Conservatives to neglect the interests of the British farmer and British producer in these questions. If it was a question of price only we might buy from abroad, or where we could get the best quality; it is a question of expense, and if you can buy cheaper foreign oats than English or Scotch they will be bought, even if they are not of so good a quality.

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** I said forage was bought according to sample; and it is a first-rate sample.

***MR. STRACHEY:** The honourable Gentleman said that was an element, but he also laid great stress on the expense, and he did not attempt to show that he was able to get better oats from abroad than he could get at home at a cheaper price. If he could do that I quite admit that my argument falls to the ground. He has not been able to show that, and I doubt if we could get any Member to rise from his own side and say that you can buy better forage for horses abroad than you can buy in England. The expense, no doubt, must be considered, but quality is the first consideration. You must get the best quality, say, of hay, or oats, at whatever price necessary. You cannot get a better quality from abroad at a cheaper price, and upon that ground I move my Amendment.

MR. MADDISON (Sheffield, Brightside): There can be no doubt that this is simply rank protection. It is sufficiently so, at all events, from my point of view, and is sufficient to make me do what I always feel great trouble in doing, and that is vote for the Tory Party. The Financial Secretary to the War Office said that instructions were given that, so far as possible, commanding officers were to draw their supplies from local sources. And then he told us they had samples. I think I am right in saying we have no commanding officer who would for the sake of cheapness give to his horses inferior forage. Army men are not too particular as a rule as to economy, because they get their money so easily. Therefore, I think you may take it for granted that the horses in

our Army do not get inferior forage. If that is so, it must be a question of cost. And I object altogether to the peculiar idea which has come from this side of the House that we are to indulge in protection. We hold strong views on the question of the Army, and we are not going to allow it to play these pranks with our fiscal system.

***MR. STRACHEY:** I say if equally good quality can be bought abroad at a lower price, let it be bought by all means, but I object to inferior quality being brought from abroad at a lower price, and putting cheapness before value.

MR. MADDISON: That means that we are simply to take from the honourable Gentleman the fact that the samples are inferior. The War Office tells us different, and between the two statements I prefer to accept that of the War Office. I think there is another thing that underlies the idea of this reduction as well as giving a better quality of forage to the horses. If that is so the honourable Gentleman must not content himself with a mere dogmatic assertion. He must be prepared to give us chapter and verse for his statement. He must bring evidence from military men that our horses are being fed on inferior forage. I myself shall vote for the Government, if this reduction is pressed to a Division, in defence of free trade principles. I object altogether to the notion that we are to spend more money in forage for the Army by, under all circumstances, getting home-grown production; because that means to many men taking money out of their pockets. It means that it must come out of the pockets of the taxpayers, and if the money were left in their pockets it would give a remunerative return. The plain truth is, if the reduction is supported, I do not see how we can advocate the principles of free trade.

***MR. STRACHEY:** Nonsense.

MR. MADDISON: It may be nonsense, but it happens to be my opinion, and, therefore, I repeat that the object

of this Motion is the object of all Protectionists—the so-called interest of the British farmer. He is a very important person, but if we had been led by him this country would have been in a very deplorable condition. I hope the honourable Gentleman will not press his Motion, but if he does I shall certainly support the Government.

COLONEL WELBY: I think what ought to be considered in this Motion is what is best for the horses. Because the condition of the horses tells immensely. Commanding officers are very much judged by the condition of their horses, and the way in which they stand their work. My experience always has been that it is a stand-up fight between the commanding officer and the forage contractor. If you are to discriminate between the places where the produce is grown, it will put a very strong weapon into the hands of the middle man. In Ireland I have seen load after load of hay taken in that anybody would be ashamed of, home produce, and we all know that the Irishman has a large and vivid imagination; when you ask where that hay was grown they point to the richest meadow in the district, and if you disbelieve them they are ready to bring 20 men to prove that what they say is true. I hope that the War Office will look to the advantage of the horses, without considering where the produce may be grown.

LORD E. FITZMAURICE (Wilts, Cricklade): I am quite aware that there is a great deal of interest taken in this matter in the district which the honourable Gentleman the Member for West Somerset, who brought this Motion, represents. I cannot, however, but think that my honourable Friend went rather further than he intended, and to a certain extent left himself open to the criticism of the honourable Member for Sheffield, that if this argument was pushed to its logical conclusion we might find ourselves in a position that some day would be described by the word Protection. I do not think that that is what my Friend intended. He might have construed the assurance of the Financial Secretary

more favourably. I might remind the Committee that I think the part of England which the honourable Gentleman represents, and which I also represent, has nothing to fear from the Government in respect to this matter, because there is no other part of England so strongly represented in the Cabinet, and I think they will have full justice done to them. I think the proper way to remedy this matter is by a fair competition between home-grown and foreign produce. This matter should be left to legitimate competition, and I believe in the case of forage—in fact, the other day I saw a statement made to the effect that foreign produce came into this country in larger quantities and better packed, and that that had resulted in a combination of the farmers in the South of England in order that they could send their produce to the places where the War Office wanted them under the same conditions. By leaving this matter to competition you obtain the remedy you desire, and, therefore, I hope that my honourable Friend will see his way to withdraw the Motion which he has made, and that he will be satisfied with the discussion which he has raised.

*MR. STRACHEY: Of course, I at once respond to the appeal that has been made by the noble Lord. All I desired to do was to protest against feeding our cavalry horses on bad forage from abroad because it was cheap. If as good and cheaper can be bought abroad, by all means let the War Office buy it, and I beg leave to withdraw the Motion.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: Before we leave this subject I should like to point out that there is no middle course in this matter. Either you are going to have free competition, which means buying the most suitable forage in the best market, or you are going to give a preference. What is the preference that you are going to give?

*MR. STRACHEY: Give a preference to the best. There is no middle course to be taken, and the only thing to be done is to give the preference to the best article, whether English or foreign.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

VOL. LXX

[FOURTH SERIES.]

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That a sum, not exceeding £1,090,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for Clothing Establishments and Services, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1900.”

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That a sum, not exceeding £1,089,900, be granted for the said Service.”—(Mr. Courtenay Warner.)

MR. COURTENAY WARNER: There is one thing which is still continued in the Service to which I should like to call attention. That is, in attempting to clothe the troops we give them two shirts to last them the whole time that they are in the Army. I think it is quite time that this was done away with, and they should be supplied with a certain number of shirts to last them through their term of service. I think it is disgraceful that this subject should have to be brought up year after year and for the Minister to reply only that he will do what he can, and the troops have to find their own shirts and deductions are made from their pay to buy them. There is another serious deduction that I think something ought to be done to stop, and that is in the question of boots. Two pairs of boots will not last a year with all the marching of our troops, and considerable deductions have to be made for repairing and buying new boots. The question of shirts is most disgraceful, and I think something ought to be done in the matter. Therefore, to put myself in order, I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £100. Of course, if the War Office is prepared to do something in the matter I shall have great pleasure in withdrawing my Motion. I do think that this subject ought to be brought up until something is done to remedy it. It is a real grievance in the Army. There is another question I should like to ask about, and that is the new cap which is to be brought out. I should like to ask what regiments will be supplied with the new caps?

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: It is a rather astonishing thing to me that while my honourable Friend and those

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who act with him make great complaints as to the amount of the Army Estimates as a whole, they are so often disposed to urge upon the Secretary of State for War all sorts of increases which would make a very great difference in our expenditure. I should not say so much if it was not the fact that the Secretary of State has done more for the comfort of the private soldier, or, at any rate, as much as any of his predecessors. The question to which the honourable Member addressed his remarks has been considered, and many articles of clothing have been added to those given to the private soldier. But we cannot go beyond a certain point in these things, and I do not think anything can be done in the direction that he asked for some time. The question involves considerably more than the honourable Member thinks. If the time comes when a further concession can be made in that direction it will be made. With regard to the point as to the caps, I cannot answer at present as to the extent to which the caps will be issued.

*MR. WEIR: There is a very considerable amount of money put down for boots. I should like to know whether arrangements could not be made to have Army boots made in Government factories. We all know how our soldiers suffered in the Soudan in consequence of their boots giving out. I cannot conceive why the Government should not undertake the manufacture of Army boots.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: What the honourable Gentleman suggests is, that the boots instead of being bought at present under the contract—and the very best quality are bought—the Government should embark in the experiment of making boots themselves. For that purpose a considerable capital outlay would be necessary, and the difficulties which surround the Government in embarking in experiments of that kind would be increased. I do not think the suggestion is a practical one.

*SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): Some of us think on this side of the House that the Government ought to move with the times. You will not get the men to enlist if you do not give more comfort than they have at the present time.

Mr. Powell Williams.

I do not think that my Friend would do well to divide the House upon this matter, because the only result of that would be that a number of people would come into the House and vote upon the question without knowing anything about the matter, and that would not be a fair test of the opinion of this House. My honourable Friend elaborates this point as to the shirts, which may seem a small and yet costly one. But I think my honourable Friend is right, and I think my honourable Friends behind me, who are economists, would nevertheless support my honourable Friend in saying that this change was desirable, and that he did well to bring that point forward.

COLONEL WELBY: I think the question of the comforts of the soldiers is not one to be ignored. When a young man joins the Army he finds the provision made for these matters of underwear, etc., is totally inadequate. And a recruit for a long time has no money whatever, owing to the deductions which are made from his pay in order that they should be supplied. The result of that is that all the advantages of a soldier's life are discounted. Men who have served in the Army come back and say "It is all very well, but you have to go and buy underwear and every necessary, and the result is that you very often have hardly a penny to yourself," and in consequence you do not get your men. At the present moment the War Office is enlisting young men under the standard in the hopes that they will grow, but I believe that this is one of the difficulties which stand in the way at the present time of recruiting for the Army.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER: I do not mean to press my reduction, but it is not quite fair to say we want to economise in anything. The Government's extravagance has been shown to-night by its keeping a garrison in the most expensive country in the world. If they only kept half the number there which they are keeping and the other half at home, where they could be easily shipped, if required, the saving there would cover the expense of the shirts. It is not such an argument after all, and whatever Government is in power, in the course of

some five or six years hence these concessions will have to be given, because, unless they are, you will not get recruits. You not only lose recruits, but you cause ill-feeling, because you profess to give them clothes, and you do not do so, and you only get the credit for deceiving them, and not any result from your beautifully coloured advertisements. They say that is all nonsense; they do not give us the clothes, but only the outside shell; and the men who have been in the Army make them think that the Government will treat them dishonestly. Under these circumstances something will have to be done.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

On the return of the CHAIRMAN after the usual interval—

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That a sum, not exceeding £2,531,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Supply and Repair of Warlike and other Stores, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1900."

*SIR C. DILKE: Mr. Lowther, I want to ask a somewhat sceptical question of the representative of the War Office. We are going to some small expense in the equipment of the Artillery with the new quick-firing attachment. This action on the part of this country corresponds with the action which has been taken by foreign Powers, involving them in enormous expense; and the scepticism which I wish to express in my question is as to whether we are so much in advance of other Powers in scientific knowledge that we have succeeded at this very small expense, in securing to ourselves the possession of a weapon which will at least compete with, or stand up against, the altered artillery of foreign Powers. We have some idea, from what we have seen in the newspapers of the vast expenditure to which Russia, Germany, and France have been put for the purpose of completing the change of the old artillery for quick-firing guns, and the change is of so startling a nature that the whole of the Infantry tactics has been changed to

correspond with the enormous artillery changes which the quick-firing gun has introduced. It will make a revolution in the whole of the military system of those Powers. We apparently have made that revolution by a cheap and easy innovation, with which, I understand, the War Office are satisfied, and which a good many Members of this House have had an opportunity of seeing; and I believe military officers are of opinion that it answers to the change which has involved enormous cost in the case of Continental Powers. I believe that British officers are also of opinion that the change made in the quick-firing attachment is as good as, if not better than, the change made in the German gun. As regards the French gun, I believe it is a secret. All we know is that a quick-firing hydraulic system has been adopted, and that it has involved France in enormous expense. Well, Sir, perhaps the representative of the War Office will be able to tell us whether the military authorities are satisfied with this quick-firing gun which they have adopted; whether they regard this as a tentative experiment; or whether they really look forward to it as a settled system which will compete with the new quick-firing gun obtained by foreign Powers at an enormous price; and whether he can tell us in what time the issue of the new attachment will be completed.

MAJOR RASCH: I desire to congratulate the War Office on their appointment to the post of Director-General of Ordnance Factories. I also desire some information from the Under Secretary with reference to the quick-firing gun which has been alluded to by the right honourable Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean. Is the quick-firing attachment of Sir George Clarke to be permanently adopted by the War Office, or are they going to adopt a different arrangement, and, if so, are they going to put the new batteries in hand?

COLONEL WYNDHAM MURRAY (Bath): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary for War whether it is the intention to change the system of rifle instruction of the Volunteers, and what the change will be?

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: Mr. Lowther, with regard to the quick-firing guns, I have to say that the arrangement which has been described as Sir George Clarke's is one in which an appliance is adopted which will materially increase the rapidity of firing the gun without, it is believed, the necessity of relaying. It entails an expenditure of about £60 per carriage, and the total cost of applying it to the whole of the batteries in the United Kingdom will be something like £100,000. What Lord Lansdowne had to consider was, whether it was desirable, seeing the advantage undoubtedly derived from this new arrangement, to immediately give directions that the whole of the existing horse and field batteries should be converted. Well, Sir, he came to the conclusion that it was desirable to take that course without prejudice to any better invention that might hereafter be submitted to him. As a consequence of that policy we shall commence a regular issue next month to the Royal Artillery batteries of gun carriages altered according to this method. There is no material alteration in the gun itself. Well, then, the first answer that I have to give to my right honourable Friend is that probably in the course of the year the whole of the horse and field Artillery will be armed with guns having this new arrangement on the carriage. But this does not end the question.

*SIR C. DILKE: Hear, hear.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: This may or may not be in the result a tentative arrangement. It may be that another invention will altogether supersede what has now been done. In conjunction with this policy the Secretary of State has had under consideration two totally different mechanisms, one designed at the Ordnance Factory and another by a private firm, and he has given directions that a battery fitted with each of these designs shall be prepared and that exhaustive experiments shall be made in order to determine whether or not either of them provides a more efficient weapon than the converted batteries of which I have spoken. Well, Sir, if that should prove to be the case, then on some future occasion some one will, I suppose, have to come to this Table

and move a Vote representing the cost of superseding the whole of the existing converted batteries and replacing them by batteries which prove on test to provide better weapons. That is the way the matter stands. It has been found by actual test that the converted battery is an extremely serviceable weapon—indeed, a very much more serviceable weapon than the batteries which now exist—but what is doubtful, after all, is whether it is the best weapon to adopt permanently in the Service. If it is proved that one of the new designs which have been ordered is better than the converted batteries of which I have been speaking, then the question will arise whether or not the Artillery should be armed with new batteries. As the matter now stands I think there is very little doubt, from the information that is in the possession of the War Office, that the converted battery is at least as good as the German battery. As to France there is, as my right honourable Friend the Member for the Forest of Dean says, considerable mystery; but he knows as well as I do that there are rumours that the French are not altogether satisfied with their new guns. The position is this. Our own batteries will be improved to a very considerable degree, probably up to over five rounds a minute, by the conversion, but the inventions which will be tried may give even better results than that. With regard to the musketry instruction for the Volunteers, it is to be altered in the direction of introducing more collective firing. The military authorities are convinced that it is essential that the Volunteers should have much more practice in collective firing, and provision for that purpose will therefore be made.

Motion made, and Question proposed---

"That a sum, not exceeding £2,530,950, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Weir.*)

*MR. WEIR: I beg to call attention to the alarming loss of money which has been caused by the imperfect inspection of ammunition, and I move to reduce the Vote by £100.

MR. W. ALLAN (Gateshead): I have listened to the remarks of the honourable Member the Financial Secretary to

the War Office, and I would like to ask a question or two. He has informed the Committee that there is a great amount of money required for the conversion of the artillery, but, at the same time, he also informed the Committee that there was a better system in view, one that would be of greater value, of more accuracy in firing, and possessing all the characteristics of a powerful quick-firing field gun. Now, personally, I think it is a waste of money to begin to convert guns on the system indicated by the honourable Gentleman to the House, and then in a short time to have them discarded. That is practically flinging away money. Would it not be far more sensible and practical to give the superior weapon every fair trial, and then take the best weapon? The Vote for the conversion of guns is £170,510 more than last year. Why spend the money in these conversions, when in the course of twelve months these guns will be discarded in favour of the new gun? It will be an absolute waste of money. There is another point. I notice that £9,850 is taken for Brennan torpedoes. I would like to ask the honourable Gentleman how is this money to be spent? Is it to be spent on torpedoes or on the stations from which the torpedoes are to be fired? I ask the information from a practical point of view.

MR. A. CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie): I wish to draw the attention of the honourable Gentleman the Financial Secretary to the War Office to Pegamoid cartridges. I am not sure whether any experiments have been made with them by the War Office. They are now extensively used for sporting purposes, and they possess many advantages. They are waterproof, and can be submerged in water with impunity, and they can be ejected from the breech with as much safety and regularity as brass-lined cartridges.

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** I do not know about this particular invention of Pegamoid cartridges, but if my honourable Friend the Member for Camlachie will take the trouble to bring it under the notice of the War Office, I have no doubt steps will be taken to ascertain whether it is suitable to be introduced in Her Majesty's Service in place of the cartridges now used. In reference to

the remarks of the honourable Member for Gateshead as to the Brennan torpedoes, the £9,850 taken for them represent the cost of manufacturing and supplying these torpedoes.

MR. ALLAN: These torpedoes are not used in the Navy at all. The Brennan torpedo is a shore torpedo.

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** The sum of £9,850 taken in the Estimates means that that is the cost of the torpedoes supplied during the year. In regard to the point which the honourable Member took as to whether the scheme of converting the field guns is or is not a good policy, I put it to him that, looking to the fact that it would take experiments extending over twelve months in order to determine whether or not a particular new invention was better than the one tentatively adopted, and looking also to the fact that after you have determined that point, it would take two more years to complete the manufacture of the adopted weapon—I say that the Secretary of State was following a good policy in materially improving the efficiency of the existing Artillery Service at a trifling cost.

***MR. WEIR:** What about the £20,000 worth of ammunition which was not rejected on account of imperfect inspection?

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** As to the rejected ammunition, this ammunition is scattered all over the face of the globe, and it occasionally happens that through unfavourable conditions of storage the ammunition becomes deteriorated and the gauge is altered. The honourable Member says that the bullet has been rejected. The fact is, that there has been a change in the pattern of the bullet used three or four years ago. The honourable Gentleman has also called attention to the fact that this matter is before the Public Accounts Committee, but I do not think that a case which has been relegated to that Committee should form the subject of discussion here now.

***MR. WEIR:** Perhaps the honourable Gentleman will agree to have this Vote postponed on account of insufficient information. I say that this rejected

tion was caused by a gross blunder on the part of the contractor, the inspector, or both. The matter has been commented upon by the Auditor-General. Since we have no information whatever on the subject, the honourable Member had better allow the Vote to stand over until it has been reported on by the Public Accounts Committee.

MR. W. ALLAN: I want an answer to my question. I do not think it right to pass this Vote until we have had some explanation. The honourable Gentleman mentioned to the Committee that the Brennan torpedoes were for the Navy. The honourable Gentleman is wrong, for the Brennan torpedo is not used in the Navy, but is worked from the shore by machinery. I want to know simply how many "Brennan torpedoes, etc."—that "etc." covers perhaps a multitude of sins—are represented by £9,850—£400 more than last year? We have been making Brennan torpedoes for the last ten years, and I want to know something about them.

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** Of course I was wrong in stating that these torpedoes were for the Navy—they are land-service torpedoes. I can give the honourable Member no other explanation than that this Estimate is for the cost of the torpedoes demanded for the land service. Let the honourable Member restrain his impetuosity. He asks me as to the number of them provided for by the Vote. He may do a simple calculation himself. I believe the Brennan torpedo costs something like £200, according to size, and a simple division sum will tell him what the number is.

SIR E. GOURLEY (Sunderland): Is it not the fact that the land torpedoes have been discarded altogether, and that the money which appears on the Estimates is on account of the original sum of £100,000, which was paid for the patents?

MR. CALDWELL (Lanark, Mid): The Financial Secretary to the War Office has not said why this Vote should not be postponed. This Vote is coming before the Public Accounts Committee, and that is a good reason why it should not be taken now. In fact, there is no particular reason why the Government should have it.

Mr. Weir.

When they have got all the money they want and can fall back on the automatic closure, and when the important question involved has been brought before the Public Accounts Committee, I venture to say that the Government will necessarily get the Vote afterwards if the Public Accounts Committee make a report favourable to it. If not, it is the object of the appointment of the Public Accounts Committee that Parliament should give weight to what that Committee may do. To pass this Vote now is to deprive the House of the benefit of the criticism of the Public Accounts Committee on this important question.

MR. MADDISON: I join in the appeal to the Financial Secretary to the War Office not to press this Vote to-night. Some of us have taken a very strong line, and we surely have some evidence of the need of watching very closely the expenditure on the Army. The Report of the Auditor-General, which has been read by my honourable Friend, points out what appears to us to be very serious blundering. Some may say that 20,000 cartridges is a mere trifle, but 20,000 cartridges come to a very large sum of money. Some of us believe very firmly, and we are backed up by very high authority, that this money for the Army comes from the toiling masses of the country, and, at any rate, we have reason to be careful in our criticism as to how the money is spent. The honourable Gentleman has himself given a reason why the Vote should be delayed, and, so far as I am concerned, I think this is a very reasonable appeal to make to the representative of the War Office, and that he will not lose by delaying this Vote. We may be able to get some further information. Whatever else may be in doubt, this is quite clear, that the honourable Gentleman who represents the War Office cannot give us the information we require on this question, as well as on many others.

MR. DAVITT (Mayo, S.): I wish to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether any of this expenditure will go in the manufacture of Dum-Dum bullets?

***MR. BRODRICK:** This question is made under very unusual circumstances. The whole object of the House has always been to take this Vote at the

earliest possible moment in the year, for if the first Vote is passed, it enables my honourable Friend to go on with the current expenditure. In regard to the suggestion that because the Public Accounts Committee have got one item which they desire to discuss, that therefore it is a reason why the whole Vote should be postponed—I think that argument is untenable. If the Secretary of State for War has in any way exceeded his powers in any operation, and it is desired to challenge the matter, the ordinary, legitimate, and proper opportunity for discussing a point of that kind is on the salary of the Secretary for War.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, No!

*MR. BRODRICK: I have sat in the House for twenty years, and I have seen that course taken on several occasions. In regard to the point which my honourable Friend has been asked to explain as to a certain amount of ammunition which was rejected, nobody supposes that the rejection of that ammunition is any reason for deferring the whole Vote for warlike stores for the year. All that the House can desire is an opportunity of criticising what may have been done amiss, and that can be done on the salary of the Secretary for War.

DR. CLARK: I can satisfy the right honourable Gentleman that there is a precedent for the course suggested even in the present Session. In one of the Votes preceding this, there were two pensions granted, to which the attention of the House was called by the Auditor-General. The right honourable Gentleman was in the House, and the Leader of the House was present, and the First Lord of the Treasury admitted that a question between the Auditor-General and the War Office was one to be decided by the Public Accounts Committee, and he argued that these pensions were not to be paid until the question at issue had been decided by the Public Accounts Committee. Now, the Auditor-General has reported unfavourably in regard to the system of inspection of ammunition by which 20,000 cartridges were passed, and afterwards rejected. The inspectors have not been doing their duty in regard to the materials. I do feel very strongly in regard to this matter. Here you are

giving our troops new and improved rifles, but if you allow scamped ammunition to pass inspection, it may have a very serious effect at a very critical moment.

*MR. BRODRICK: But that ought to be discussed on the War Office Vote.

DR. CLARK: We only want to carry out the conditions laid down by the First Lord of the Treasury that nothing will be paid and nothing done until this question has been settled by the Public Accounts Committee. We point to the Auditor-General, who reports on the question very unfavourably. We refer that to the Public Accounts Committee, who are the jury, and all we ask is that the Government should not make these payments until the jury have given their verdict. If we pass this Vote, I do not see how the whole question can be reopened again, if the Public Accounts Committee agree with the Auditor-General on the salary of the honourable Gentleman or that of the Secretary of State for War. All these things come up on special Votes. Until the judge and jury give their verdict, we ought not to give the Vote. I think what we ought to get is some statement from someone in authority that, if the Auditor-General's position is supported by the Public Accounts Committee as to how this bad ammunition was passed by the inspectors, some action will be taken. A certain sum has to be obtained by the Government, and the best way will be to keep back £5 or something from this Vote in order that we may have something else to say about it hereafter.

MR. CALDWELL: I advise the Government that they will not promote the business of Supply by refusing the request that has been made for the postponement of the Vote. We know that if they refuse a request of this kind, not only will their Votes be contested, but the question can also be raised on the Report stage. By postponing the Vote, legitimate opportunity will also be afforded of discussing the matter in the Public Accounts Committee. It was said that this question can be raised on the War Office Vote, but the Chairman will tell the Committee that he has frequently ruled that a question of this kind can only be raised on the specific

item, and not on the War Office salaries. Therefore, in the particular case I allude to, it is on this Vote, and this Vote only, that it can be raised, and I do not think the Government will facilitate progress of Supply to-night or any other night if they refuse this request. They do not want this Vote to-night, and they have it in their power to obtain it by automatic closure later. If, therefore, they insist on going on with this Vote, I do not think they will facilitate progress.

***THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES:** Can the honourable Member show me where the salaries of these inspectors appear in this Vote?

MR. BRODRICK: There is no difference of opinion that this subject should be discussed after the Public Accounts Committee have reported on it.

DR. CLARK: Might I call your attention, Sir, to item 61, page 9—

***THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES:** Order, order! If the honourable Member will look at the Vote he will see it applies to harness, saddlery, and accoutrements. There are only five inspectors altogether, and it is obvious that the salaries of the inspectors of ammunition are borne on Vote 1. Therefore, this discussion ought really not to have taken place at all.

***MR. BRODRICK:** The position is simply this. What was done by one of these inspectors is now to be considered by the Public Accounts Committee. Surely there will be an opportunity to discuss the matter, not on this Vote, but on the Vote for the salary of the Secretary of State, which the Chairman will probably rule as the proper opportunity on which to question the action of any official whose salary was taken under Vote 1 last year. The First Lord of the Treasury has already, in deference to an appeal from honourable Members opposite, undertaken that the War Office and the Ordnance Votes will not be taken to-night. They will be taken later in the Session, and an opportunity will then be given to challenge this particular subject, if honourable Members deem it necessary. It is quite obvious that it is impossible to-night to postpone this Vote and to undertake not to

spend 2½ millions of money in order that honourable Members may challenge the action of some inspector whose salary was taken under Vote 1 last year. It is not reasonable to expect that. I think it might be more regularly raised on another Vote, and that we might be allowed to take this Vote to-night.

***MR. WEIR:** I should like to call the attention of the honourable Gentleman to the fact that there is £355,000 set down for inspectors of stores. That is in Vote 9, not Vote 1, which has nothing to do with this question. If we go away from Vote 9 we shall be dished and lose our opportunity for discussing the matter.

MR. ALLAN: I would ask whether the right honourable Gentleman is satisfied that the British Artillery—field and horse—shall consist in future of converted guns.

***MR. BRODRICK:** To ask me for my personal opinion on a matter on which I have no technical knowledge is rather a hard thing to do, but I entirely concur with what my honourable Friend has stated.

DR. CLARK: The Vote to which we have been referred is for regimental pay. Am I to understand that the technical examination of ammunition is done by ordinary soldiers? In the old days of black powder that might be so, but perhaps it is the Chemical Department that looks after it now. I should say that inspection ought to be under the Chemical Department, and that no ordinary soldier should be entrusted with it at all. We have now a position exactly analogous to what we had when the Army Estimates were discussed last. The Auditor-General reported that £20,000 worth of ammunition which was passed was afterwards condemned, and that the matter had been referred to the Committee on Public Accounts, and we got a pledge that nothing would be done until the Public Accounts Committee had reported. My honourable Friend has now moved to report progress in order to have this matter reported on, or else to have the Vote postponed altogether. The Government has got nearly all the money it requires, and the rest is of no importance.

MR. CALDWELL: May I point out to the First Lord of the Treasury how the matter stands? It seems that about £20,000 worth of stores have been condemned, and that attention has been called to the unreliability of the inspectors by the Auditor-General. That, as the First Lord of the Treasury will admit, is a very important matter.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: Order, order! As I have already pointed out, the question of inspection does not arise on this Vote, because the salaries of the inspectors are not borne on it. Therefore the question cannot be any longer discussed.

MR. CALDWELL: I have asked that this Vote might be withdrawn for this reason. The Government cannot possibly lose anything by its postponement, because, as the First Lord of the Treasury is aware, the Government have already got all the money they require up to August, and will get far more money to-night than they require, and if this Vote is postponed, it will be included in the automatic closure at the end of the Session, and there will be no delay. What is the use of fighting against the postponement of this Vote when there is no practical object on the part of the Government to be gained.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am sure the honourable Gentleman will not press his objection to this Vote. There is a large sum of money to be expended in the course of the present year. To that expenditure no objection has been taken, but objection has been taken to the action of certain inspectors, not in the present year, but in the course of the preceding year, which is alleged to have been unsatisfactory. I think the Committee ought to have full cognisance of any such question which naturally and properly comes before it; but the consideration of it is not on this Vote, but on the War Office Vote, and if the Committee will give us this Vote to-night, as I am sure it will, I will undertake on behalf of the Government that an opportunity will be given to raise this question later.

*MR. WEIR: In view of the statement made by the First Lord of the Treasury, I beg to withdraw my Amendment. Now

I wish to draw attention to the next item. It is a sum of £50,000 for the repair of small arms, browning, etc. Last year it was only £42,210. I wish to know why it is necessary to increase the Vote by £7,790. I move to reduce the Vote by £5,000.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: If the reduction is made there will be a smaller number of men employed at Enfield. The item is based on the best estimate that can be formed as to the amount that will be spent on this particular service during the year. It is not a stable item, but varies from year to year.

*MR. WEIR: I am well aware of that. But the honourable Gentleman has not said whether this enormous increase goes to Birmingham or Enfield. My experience is that these repairs are carried out at Birmingham. But in any event I should not feel justified in allowing this Vote to pass without challenging it.

MR. CALDWELL: I must say that no explanation whatever has been given as to why the Vote has been increased. It is no explanation to tell us that the reduction of this Vote will mean less work for the men. Are we then a body of persons whose object is simply to afford employment? Are we not interested in the proper expenditure of this money, and whether it is required for the public interest or not? The honourable Gentleman has not said a single word as to why an increased expenditure is needed this year. If he got his instructions properly from the War Office he ought to know why more money is required. He ought to be able to explain the increase, and I think it is not treating the Committee fairly to say that if we do not vote this money there will be less employment for the men. I think if a Minister cannot tell us what the money is going to be expended for that we are perfectly justified in challenging the Vote.

COLONEL WELBY: I think I can explain the matter to the honourable Gentleman. It is very possible that there has been a larger issue of rifles this year than last year.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER: That may be a sufficient explanation, but we want it from the proper quarter. There

has been an enormous increase for small arms and no explanation of any kind has been given. I do not know whether the Financial Secretary can give us any explanation, but if he cannot, I should suggest that we should defer this Vote.

MR. MADDISON: Sir, the position of this discussion has really become farcical when a Minister will not or cannot give us the remotest information with regard to this matter. The honourable and gallant Gentleman comes to his rescue, and gives what may or may not be an adequate explanation. But we cannot accept the explanation from him; we must have it from the Front Bench. I put it to the right honourable Gentleman, and demanded from him an explanation of this large increase, and the only reply we got was that if there was a reduction in this item it would cause a diminution in the number of men employed. We on this side of the House are prepared to face the diminution in the number of men employed if you agree to the reduction. Are you prepared to defend this increase on the ground that it will cause more men to be employed. We shall be obliged to vote for the reduction unless we get in plain terms a reason which will satisfy us as the representatives of our constituencies. We cannot treat these thousands of pounds in the airy way in which they are dealt with by the honourable Gentleman. What is our duty in this House? As everyone knows, when Ministers refuse to give us a reason for any expenditure—what is our duty, our function, where does that go to? Are we here as mere mechanical voting machines? Are we to take on faith the policy of these Estimates? The honourable Gentleman took a firm stand to-night on a certain question, and we backed him up to the best of our ability; but now he has departed from that position, and he simply tells us we must give the Vote or throw British workmen out of employment. But they do not want to be employed unless there is a need for it. And the honourable Gentleman gives us no explanation whatever.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: I have no explanation to give. I know all about it and the honourable Gentleman knows all about it. What is there lacking in the way of

Mr. C. Urtenay Warner.

explanation? We know that the original rifle has been a little longer in the hands of the troops, and the longer they are in their hands the greater is the repair that is necessary. Therefore, we come to the House and ask the House to provide for those repairs. In regard to the additional charge for new rifles to which the honourable Gentleman referred, the House sanctioned, two years ago, a considerable addition to the Army, amounting, when it was completed, to 25,000 or 26,000 men. That means that additional rifles are required to put arms into the hands of these new soldiers. The House knows that they are not all raised; some are and some are not, and, as they are raised, you must have rifles for them. I hope that is a reasonable explanation and that Honourable Members will accept it.

MR. CALDWELL: I must say that is not by any means a reasonable explanation. The honourable Gentleman knows perfectly well that last year there were in the rank and file as many men as you expect to have this year; the number would not seem to be much greater one year than the other. I think we ought to have some explanation, for, so far as I can see, we have not had any at all. I hope my honourable Friend will go to a Division.

CAPTAIN SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD: I must congratulate the other side of the House on the number of aspirants they have for the post of Secretary for War. I am glad to see they take this interest in military matters. Speaking as an old soldier, I am perfectly satisfied with the explanation of my honourable Friend, and I think all other military men in this House will also be satisfied. I hope the honourable Member will go to a Division, and if he does, I am certain that all those who sit upon this side of the House will vote against him.

MR. GODDARD (Ipswich): With regard to whether we should challenge this Vote, I may point out that we were distinctly challenged in

this direction. We are told we voted for these sums of money and we were not the men to find them. What we complain of is that when we ask for an explanation for such an excessive charge as £8,000, the explanation given us is so very unsatisfactory. It is only right to challenge this amount; we are bound to do so.

Mr. POWER (Waterford, E.): My honourable Friend the Member for South Mayo asked whether any expenditure was connected with the manufacture of Dum-Dum bullets. We have no explanation in this Vote as to whether they are made in England or elsewhere.

*Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS: In answer to the honourable Gentleman I said—

Mr. POWER: You shook your head, which is not good Parliamentary language.

*Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS: That no Dum-Dum bullets were made here, and that they were not included in this Vote.

*Mr. WEIR: The honourable Gentleman dealt with the repairs, and it was pointed out by an honourable Member on the other side that that included the manufacture of millions of spare parts. It is quite possible that next year you may make a smaller number of spare parts.

Motion made, and Question put—

"That a sum, not exceeding £2,526,000, be granted for the said service."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 53; Noes 130.—(Division List No. 89.)

AYES.

Allan, William (Gateshead)
Allen, W. (Newc.-under-Lyme)
Asher, Alexander
Austin, Sir J. (Yorkshire)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. B. (Clackm.)
Barlow, J. Emmott
Buchanan, T. Ryburn
Burt, Thomas
Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson
Channing, Francis Allston
Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)
Davitt, Michael
Dillon, John
Dunn, Sir William
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
Foster, Sir W. (Derby Co.)
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gourley, Sir E. Temperley

Hazell, Walter
Hogan, James Francis
Hutton, A. E. (Morley)
Jones, W. (Carnarvonshire)
Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.
Kinloch, Sir John G. Smyth
Lawson, Sir W. (Cumberland)
Macaleese, Daniel
McArthur, W. (Cornwall)
McGhee, Richard
Maddison, Fred.
Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
Molloy, Bernard Charles
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Oldroyd, Mark
Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Reckitt, Harold James

Richardson, J. (Durham)
Rickett, J. Compton
Robertson, E. (Dundee)
Shaw, T. (Hawick B.)
Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
Strachey, Edward
Sullivan, D. (Westmeath)
Ure, Alexander
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Warner, T. Courtenay
Whittaker, T. Palmer
Williams, J. Carvell (Notts.)
Wilson, John (Govan)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES
Mr. Weir and Mr.
Caldwell.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
Allhusen, A. Henry Eden
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. J.
Bagot, Capt. J. FitzRoy
Baird, J. G. Alexander
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
Banbury, Fredk. George
Barnes, Frederic Gorrell
Bartley, George C. T.
Barton, Dunbar Plunket
Bathurst, Hon. A. Benjamin
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bethell, Commander
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. J.

Butcher, John George
Carson, Rt. Hon. Edward
Cayzer, Sir C. William
Cecil, E. (Hertford, E.)
Charrington, Spencer
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Cornwallis, F. Stanley W.
Cox, I. Edward B. (Harrow)
Cross, Alex. (Glasgow)
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Denny, Colonel
Dickson-Poynder, Sir J. P.
Dilke, Rt. Hn. Sir Charles
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
Elliot, Hon. A. R. Douglas
Fellows, Hon. A. Edward
Finch, George H.

Finlay, Sir R. Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir R. Penrose-
Folkestone, Viscount
Foster, Colonel (Lancaster)
Fry, Lewis
Garfit, William
Gedge, Sydney
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. Geo.'s)
Goulding, Edw. Alfred
Green, W. D. (Wednesbury)
Greene, H. D. (Shrewsbury)
Greene, W. Raymond- (Camb.)
Gull, Sir Cameron
Haldane, Richard Burdon
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Henderson, Alexander
Howell, Wm. Tudor
Hosier, Hon. J. H. Cecil

Hutton, J. (Yorks. N.R.)
 Jackson, Rt. Hon. W. Lawies
 Jobb, R. Claverhouse
 Jessel, Capt. Herbt. Merton
 Johnston, Wm. (Belfast)
 Kenyon-Staney, Col. Wm.
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawrence, Sir E. Durning (Corn-
 Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks.)
 Lecky, Rt. Hon. W. E. H.
 Leigh-Pennett, H. Currie
 Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Loder, Gerald W. Erskine
 Long, Rt. Hon. W. (Liverpool)
 Lopes, H. Yarle Buller
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowles, John
 McArthur, Chas. (Liverpool)
 Macartney, W. G. Elisea
 Macdonna, J. Cumming
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Morrell, George Herbert
 Morton, A. H. A. (Deptford)
 Mount, William George
 Murray, Rt. Hon. A. G. (Bute)

Murray, C. J. (Coventry)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Nicholson, Wm. Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Norton, Capt. Cecil William
 Orr-Ewing, Chas. Lindsay
 Pease, H. Pike (Darlington)
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Pilkington, Richard
 Pollock, Harry Frederick
 Purvis, Robert
 Rasch, Major Frederic C.
 Richards, Henry Chas.
 Ritchie, Rt. Hon. C. T.
 Rothschild, Hon. Lionel W.
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Cheltenham)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Samuel, Harry S. (Linchouse)
 Sassoon, Sir Edward A.
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sidebottom, T. H. (Stalybr.)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Skewes-Cox, Thomas
 Smith, A. H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)

Stanley, Edw. J. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Strauss, Arthur
 Strutt, Hon. C. Hedley
 Sutherland, Sir Thomas
 Tait, Lord E. (Chichester)
 Talbot, Rt. Hon. J. G. (Oxford Univ.)
 Thorburn, Walter
 Trevelyan, Charles Philipps
 Tritton, Charles Ernest
 Valentin, Viscount
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (I. of W.)
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Whitmore, Chas. Algernon
 Williams, J. Powell. (Birm.)
 Wolchouse, Rt. Hon. E. R. (Bath)
 Wolf, Gustav Wilhelm
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Young, Com. (Berks, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE HOUSE—
 Sir William Walrand and
 Mr. Anstruther

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

DR. CLARK: I should like to have some explanation from the Admiralty as to the increase in the item for boats and vessels, from £34,000 to £58,000.

MR. BRODRICK: Some of it is due to work done by our own vessels in the way of transports, but it is mainly due to the work done by hired transports. I think that explanation will be satisfactory to the honourable Gentleman.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): Might I ask the honourable Gentleman what ships were employed for hired transport last year, and what was paid for them?

MR. BRODRICK: The hired transport was paid out of the Vote for ships—that is to say, the transport of stores. I call that transport.

MR. GODDARD: Might I ask for some explanation as to miscellaneous stores?

MR. BRODRICK: That is for supplies to all parts of the world, and to our storehouses themselves when they have got their stock down below the normal amount. When stock-taking takes place, and it is found that the stock has run down, it is necessary to replace it. Naval stores are a valuable entity, and contain a large number of other stores.

MR. BUCHANAN: There is one thing which I wish to call attention to upon this Vote, and that is, that this Vote does not give the exact amount which is required during the current year, and that will involve taking money from the Supplementary Estimates. The Financial Secretary to the War Office states, at page 60 of the Estimates, where he gives the net total of the Army Estimates for 1899-1900, that the two Estimates ought to be so much more, and ought to include an extra sum of £20,000 for stores. He further explains that the real amount on the Vote for stores does not appear in the Estimates, but in an amount taken in the Supplementary Estimates taken before the 31st of March this year. It is unfortunately becoming a very common practice, and it leads to confusion, to take the Estimates on from one year to another. I trust that we shall have an assurance from the honourable Gentleman the Secretary to the War Office that it shall not become the regular practice, and that if possible it shall in the future be discontinued, so that when the Army Estimates come on for discussion next year we shall have the real amount of Votes before us, and shall not be compelled to refer to the Estimates of the preceding year.

*MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: The honourable Gentleman called the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to that subject, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer assured the honourable Gentleman that

the matter would receive his consideration. I think I ought to say with regard to the question of the increase of rifles, that it was considered desirable that certain particular purchases should be made in respect of that increase, so that when the men were enrolled we might have the arms to put into their hands. Taking the Estimates of the last two years, the increase in this Vote will be found to be more apparent than real. The Vote is very much the same as it was in the year when the change first occurred. My honourable Friend may rest assured that there will be little need to have recourse to the system in future.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancs., Clitheroe): The honourable Gentleman has not only shown a strong inclination against this growing practice of bringing in Supplemental Estimates in relief of the current year's expenditure, but he has brought to the attention of the Committee what must be the ultimate result of such a practice. A good many of the inquiries addressed to honourable Members of the Government would be unnecessary if we could compare one year's expenditure with another by means of these Estimates. I am glad to hear that the existing system of presenting the account for warlike clothing and stores will be discontinued, for it is very misleading, and utterly defeats the proper control of Parliament over those accounts.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That a sum, not exceeding £305,800, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Pay, etc., of the Medical Establishment, and for Medicines, etc., which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1900."

DR. CLARK: There is one thing upon which I should like to have some information. Why has so much been put down for civilian medical attendance last year? Last year the noble Lord the Secretary of State for War issued a very valuable warrant carrying out the reforms required by the medical profession and conceding the demands which had

been made by the Medical Department, and, as I thought, the boycott against the Army by the medical profession was last year removed. The present estimate is as large as that of last year, when we could not get enough medical men to fill the positions. The civilian medical man does not get the peculiar training that the regimental medical man obtains at the Netley Hospital, and the result is seen in the very sad case which I had the honour to bring to the attention of the Committee recently, where, owing to the young civilian medical man not having the proper training, he treated a young man as a malingerer, and the poor fellow died two hours afterwards. He thought he was shamming. I had hoped that under the new conditions you would have got better men, and would not have required so many civilian medical officers. In the Eastern district you have a fairly efficient staff, but in the neighbouring districts you are paying a very large sum for outside medical assistance. I thought that under the new conditions, which have given satisfaction to the medical profession, and for which they are grateful to the Secretary of State for War, more military doctors would have been available. I should like to know how things are going on, whether we are able to get sufficient candidates, and to what extent we are depending on outside aid.

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** I am glad to say that things are going on better than before. We are now able to get two candidates for each vacancy that we announce; and it is clear, therefore, that the action which has been taken by the Secretary of State is going to have the desired effect.

COLONEL WELBY: The reduction which stands in my name is intended to draw attention to the organisation of this department of the Army, and I believe it is in the organisation that a great deal of the difficulty is caused to which the honourable Member for Gateshead referred. I would point out to the honourable Member that there must always be a certain number of civilian practitioners employed where regiments are broken up in small detachments; and I agree with him that there are too many employed at regimental head-

quarters. One of the advantages of the old system, under which the medical officer was attached to a regiment, is that the doctor gets to know his men and to understand their constitutions. Under the present system there is no opportunity of this, and the result must be to take much of the interest out of the work of the medical officer, while the disadvantages for the non-commissioned officers and men are very great. I had a case in my own regiment of a sergeant-major suffering from aneurism of the heart, who was attended by six different medical men in 10 days, and this was no new experience. What chance can a patient have when he receives such treatment? This would not matter in common cases which arise from drink and other causes, but when you have a case like the one to which I have referred I think it is a very serious matter. The men themselves feel that they never have a chance, and the consequence is that when invalided into the country they tell everyone that had they been treated properly by the regimental doctor they would have been considerably better. A curious thing is that we treat the horses of the Army with more consideration, the veterinary surgeons not being shifted about in the same way that the medical officers are. It is perfectly well known that a veterinary surgeon permanently attached to a regiment can treat the horses better, and keep them freer from disease. It is very easy to criticise, and I shall be told that it is difficult to suggest a remedy. One remedy suggested is that a senior medical officer should be treated differently to the juniors, and that a senior medical officer should be attached to every regiment in the Service. The junior medical officers could then undergo any training necessary for their efficiency. Another remedy is one which will, I am afraid, require change of organisation—namely, that regiments should be grouped into brigades. If a brigade move about the country as a complete unit, it will then be possible to attach medical officers to each, who would get to know the men under their charge. The Army would then not only be more efficient, but the men would be more contented, and it would be infinitely easier to get recruits.

Colonel Welby.

DR. FARQUHARSON: I have listened with great interest, and with considerable sympathy, to the speech of my honourable and gallant Friend, but I would remind him we are now in a different position to what we were two years ago. At the earnest desire of the Army medical officers themselves, they have been made into a Royal Corps, and the condition of their service has been completely changed. I very much doubt whether it would be possible now to introduce the old regimental system. Moreover, the Financial Secretary to the War Office will no doubt tell us that to return to the old regimental system would cost at least £55,000. Whether the change would be worth that I do not know. I tender to the noble Marquess, the Secretary of State for War, my cordial thanks for having brought about this change, which I hope will be of great benefit to the Service at large, and to the medical profession in particular. I am very glad to hear that the change is popular amongst medical men, and that better men are now coming forward than in the past. I gladly recognise that the system of nomination from medical schools has drafted into the medical service some of the best men from the medical schools. There is one other point to which I wish to draw the attention of the Committee. The honourable and gallant Member for the West Newington Division has referred on one or two occasions to the accommodation for conveying the sick and wounded from India and the Colonies. I have been asked by the British Medical Association to urge the necessity for having a permanent hospital ship for this purpose, especially when we remember that there are 200 wounded and sick officers and 2,500 wounded and sick men brought back from India and the Colonies every year.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: I do not think that is a question that can be raised on this Vote. If raised at all it should be on the Transport Vote.

*MR. PIRIE: I entirely agree with my honourable and gallant Friend the Member for Taunton, as regards the advisability, if possible, of encouraging the old practice of regimental medical officers, but at the same time I am not blind to the great difficulties

which have got to be encountered. I think it necessary to remind honourable Members that the Army does not exist for the medical service, but the medical service for the Army. Of course, we must give way to prejudices which medical men have, and encourage them to come forward as candidates for the medical service, but it must be distinctly understood that the interests of the Royal Army Medical Corps must be subservient to the welfare of the soldiers and the British Army. Unless that could be carried out you might as well not have Medical Departments at all. In my experience the case of the sergeant-major of the Scots Greys is not a solitary one by any means, but occurs very frequently. Men continually complain of the constant change in the medical officer to which they are subjected in hospital, and I think the fact that the attention of the Committee has been called to this practice ought to be sufficient to secure its abolition. I should like to have some information with regard to the convalescent homes which have been promised for the Army, and to know how many men they will accommodate, and where they will be situated. The utmost credit is due to my honourable and gallant Friend the Member for West Newington who has done so much to procure this great boon for the soldier, and I am surprised that such a long time has elapsed before the Army is provided with such a necessary adjunct, and I hope the Financial Secretary will be able to give the Committee some information on this important point.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: I do not think this is in order on this Vote. It would be more properly raised on some Works Vote.

MR. PIRIE: With all due respect, Mr. Lowther, I fail to understand how these convalescent homes can be started without some increase to the medical establishment, and therefore I thought it would be in order to raise this question now. However, if it can be brought up on another Vote, I shall be glad to call attention to it.

DR. CLARK: I should like to know why the Medical Report for 1898 is not in the hands of honourable Members.

I also wish to know whether the Department has favourably considered the very important Report of the principal medical officer at the Cape with regard to barracks. It discloses a very unsatisfactory condition of things. The barracks in South Africa, for instance, are not such as we should spend any more money upon unless we can bring about serious changes. Owing to the condition of the barracks there has been a great deal of discontent and suffering on the part of the men. There is no proper drainage, and enteric fever and other diseases have been prevalent. The water supply should be filtered. In the dry season the supply is so scarce that it has to be supplemented by well water. The medical officers have reported strongly against the re-occupation of these old stations, and I cannot understand why on earth they have been again used.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: I do not think the state of the barracks can be discussed on this Vote.

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** No doubt the sites of the barracks are not ideal sites, and that there are many disadvantages, but I—

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: I have just ruled that a discussion upon the state of the barracks could not take place on this Vote.

***MR. POWELL WILLIAMS:** I was about to reply to the remarks of the honourable Member with regard to the sanitary arrangements, but will not do so as you have ruled the discussion out of order.

***CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.):** I desire to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office what steps, if any, have been taken to improve the nursing arrangements in connection with the sick and wounded of the Army. Not long ago I had occasion to bring before the House the shocking state of affairs which occurred in the late Soudan campaign. I am sorry to be obliged to go to some extent over the whole ground, but I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that after the battle of Omdurman 1,080 men were

laid up in hospital at Alexandria and Cairo with only 10 trained hospital nurses to attend them. The excuse offered by the Under Secretary for War was that there were a certain number of what he designated as male nurses. These male nurses consist of men of the Royal Army Hospital Corps, who get a preliminary training which extends over six weeks only. There is no comparison between hospital nurses, who go through a long course of training, and these male nurses. We find that for the whole British Division there were only 10 nurses to 1,080 men who, through deficient transport, were detained at Alexandria and Cairo for over four weeks. Seventy men suffering from enteric fever had only two nurses to look after them, and the death rate, instead of being 5 per cent. was 10 per cent. One hundred and four of these died, but how many more succumbed in consequence of insufficient nursing upon the voyage home is not known. Of the battalion of Grenadier Guards which came home, no fewer than 100 went into hospital in London and seven died. It may be said that we have an insufficient supply of trained nurses, but in cases of emergency there are a number of reserve nurses who can be called upon. My belief is that sufficient nurses were not forthcoming owing to a wretched petty economy. I wish to enter my protest in order that in future expeditions there may be no cheeseparing in this matter, with consequent suffering and loss of life. I shall, therefore, be glad to know that we have a sufficient staff of trained army nurses, and that, if we have not, the matter will be attended to, so that in future campaigns our soldiers shall not be left to the mercy of hospital orderlies.

Mr. PIRIE: I know it is the general opinion of the country that the War Office has been guilty of a false and petty economy, and I think we should have some information from the Financial Secretary on the subject. Some remarkable letters have appeared in "The Times," from an officer of great authority, which showed up the condition of affairs in the most glaring way. It is a matter which the Committee ought not to pass over without explanation.

Captain Norton.

*Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS: It has already been pointed out that in a great number of cases, especially under the conditions prevailing in the Soudan, it would almost be impossible to employ female nurses. It is partly a military and partly a medical matter, but I do not think there is any difference between the two authorities on the subject. Under the conditions that prevail at home, undoubtedly female nurses serve the purpose better than male nurses. Under the conditions that prevail at Cairo, I am told that that is certainly not the case, and that the advantages of employing male nurses in those cases are very manifest. The men attached to the Army Medical Staff are described as hospital orderlies, but in a very large number of cases they are trained nurses.

*SIR W. FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkington): I regard the explanation given by the Financial Secretary to the War Office as very unsatisfactory. We should not tolerate the condition of things to which attention has been called in any civil hospital in this country, and it is a condition of things that does not reflect credit on the general administration of the Army. It was a foolish and petty economy which brought about such a state of things, and I hope we shall have no repetition of it in any future campaign.

Motion made, and Question put—

"That a sum, not exceeding £305,700, be granted for the said Service."—(*Captain Norton.*)

*CAPTAIN NORTON: Might I point out that the state of affairs was far worse than I represented. The hospitals at Alexandria and Cairo were so overcrowded that they were obliged to pitch tents in the vicinity of the hospitals—the very worst place possible. Moreover, the tents were not even what are known as field hospital tents, but were ordinary tents, the proper tents being in store. The Royal Army Medical Department are in no way to blame for this. They condemned the proceedings which compelled them to pay attention to the sick without having proper medical appliances at their command. The Army Medical Department asked that they might have a hospital ship sent to

Alexandria, so that in the event of there being a large number of troops coming down from the front, as they knew there would be in consequence of bad water and the hardships of campaign, they would have the staff which necessarily accompanies the hospital ship to draw upon in case of need, and in order to enable them to cope with the demand which was made upon them at Cairo and Alexandria. As a protest against the mismanagement in this matter, I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Dr. CLARK: The responsibility for what has occurred does not rest with the

Medical Department, who asked for all that was necessary, but their demands were refused. Typhoid fever is a disease in which efficient nursing is everything. Skilled nursing will bring a man through, but without it he will die, no matter what the medical man may do for him. Male nurses are not specially trained to deal with these cases.

Question put—

“That a sum not exceeding £505,700 be granted for the said service.”

The Committee divided:—Ayes 39; Noes 102.—(Division List No. 90.)

AYES.

Allhusen, A. Henry Eden
Asher, Alexander
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. B. (Clackm.)
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Caldwell, James
Channing, Francis Allston
Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)
Clough, Walter Owen
Davitt, Michael
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Chas.
Dillon, John
Duncombe, Hon. H. V.
Dunn, Sir William
Foster, Sir W. (Derby Co.)
Goddard, Daniel Ford

Haldane, Richard Burdon
Hayne, Rt. Hon. C. Seale
Hutton, A. E. (Morley)
Lambert, George
Lawson, Sir W. (Cumberland)
Macaleese, Daniel
McArthur, W. (Cornwall)
McGhee, Richard
Maddison, Fred.
Oldroyd, Mark
Pease, J. A. (Northumb.)
Power, Patrick Joseph
Reckitt, Harold James
Shaw, T. (Hawick B.)
Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)

Sullivan, D. (Westmeath)
Trevelyan, Chas. Philips
Ure, Alexander
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Warner, T. Courtenay T.
Weir, James Galloway
Williams, J. Carvell (Notts.)
Wilson, John (Govan)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES
Captain Norton and Mr Pirie.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
Ashmead Bartlett, Sir E.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. J.
Balcarras, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
Banbury, Fredk. George
Barton, Dunbar Plunket
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Beckett, Ernest William
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Beresford, Lord Charles
Bethell, Commander
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Brasse, Abert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. J.
Butcher, John George
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
Cayzer, Sir C. William
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Charrington, Spencer
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Corbett, A. C. (Glasgow)
Cornwallis, F. Stanley W.
Cox, I. Edward B. (Harrow)
Crymple, Sir Charles

Denny, Colonel
Dickson-Poynder, Sir J. P.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Fellowes, Hon. A. Edward
Finch, George H.
Finlay, Sir R. Pannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir R. Penrose-
Folkestone, Viscount
Foster, Colonel (Lancaster)
Fry, Lewis
Garfit, William
Gedge, Sydney
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. Geo.'s)
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
Green, W. D. (Wendesbury)
Gull, Sir Cameron
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Henderson, Alexander
Jessel, Capt. Herbt. Merton
Johnston, Wm. (Belfast)
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. Wm.
Lawrence, Sir E. Durning- (Corn-
Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks.)
Leigh-Bennett, H. Currie
Lockwood, Lt. Col. A. R.

Loder, Gerald W. Erskine
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (Liverpool)
Lopes, H. Yarde Buller
Lowe, Francis William
Macartney, W. G. Ellison
Macdonald, J. Cumming
McArthur, Chas. (Liverpool)
Middlemore, J. Throsmorton
Morrell, George Herbert
Mount, William George
Murray, Rt. Hn. A. G. (Bute)
Murray, C. J. (Coventry)
Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
Nicholson, Wm. Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Northcote, Hon. Sir H. S.
Orr-Ewing, Chas. Lindsay
Pease, H. Pike (Darlington)
Pierpoint, Robert
Pilkington, Richard
Pellock, Harry Frederick
Purvis, Robert
Rasch, Major Frederic C.
Richards, Henry Chas.
Ritchie, Rt. Hon. C. T.
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Rothschild, Hon. Lionel W.
Russell, T. W. (Tyne)

Sasseon, Sir Edward A.
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Strauss, Arthur
 Strutt, Hon. C. Hedley
 Sutherland, Sir Thomas
 Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)

Talbot, Rt Hon J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.)
 Trittton, Charles Ernest
 Valentia, Viscount
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (I. of W.)
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Williams, J. Powell- (Birm.)
 Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm

Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Young, Com. (Berks, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther

Original Question again proposed.

Debate arising;

And, it being after Midnight, the
 CHAIRMAN left the Chair to make his
 Report to the House.

Resolutions to be reported upon Mon-
 day next; Committee also report Pro-
 gress; to sit again upon Monday next.

The House resumed—

BUDGET RESOLUTIONS.

WAYS AND MEANS (20TH APRIL).

The House resumed.

TEA.

1. "That the Duty of Customs now
 payable on Tea shall continue to be
 charged, levied, and paid on and after
 the first day of August, one thousand
 eight hundred and ninety-nine, until the
 first day of August, one thousand nine
 hundred, on the importation thereof into
 Great Britain or Ireland (that is to
 say);—

Tea . the pound . Four Pence."

INCOME TAX.

2. "That Income Tax shall be charged
 for the year beginning the sixth day of
 April, one thousand eight hundred and
 ninety-nine, at the rate of eightpence."

Resolutions agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to
 the Gentlemen appointed to bring in a
 Bill upon the Resolutions reported from
 the Committee of Ways and Means on
 the 14th instant, and then agreed to by
 the House, that they do make provision
 therein pursuant to the said Resolutions.
 —(Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.)

BUSINESS DEFERRED.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Monday next.

COUNTY COUNCILLORS (QUALIFICA- TION OF WOMEN) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday
 1st May.

SMALL TENANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
 day next.

CORONERS' INQUESTS (RAILWAY FATALITIES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday
 next.

MERCHANT SEAMEN (RATING CER- TIFICATES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday
 1st May.

SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS (SCOT- LAND) BILL.

Consideration, as amended, deferred
 till Tuesday next.

House adjourned at ten minutes
 after Twelve of the clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 24th April 1899.

The LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat upon the Woolsack at Four of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

WORKINGTON CORPORATION WATER BILL [H.L.] (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION.)

The order for the meeting of the Standing Orders Committee on Monday next, discharged.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with—

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order.

Also the Certificate that no further Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bill—

Ilford Urban District Council.

Also the Certificate that the Standing Orders applicable to the petition for additional provision in the following Bill have not been complied with—

Portsmouth Corporation.

Also the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with—

Nottingham Corporation.

Woodhouse and Conisbrough Railway (Abandonment).

Central London Railway.

Vale of Glamorgan Railway.

Brynmaur and Western Valleys Railway.

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[FOURTH SERIES.]

Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton Urban District Council Water.

Stockport Corporation Water.

Stockport District Water.

Burley-in-Wharfedale Urban District Water.

Clay Cross Water.

And also the Certificate that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with—

Metropolitan Water Companies.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Report from; That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Lowestoft Promenade Pier Bill ought to be dispensed with—

Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

COBHAM GAS BILL [H.L.]

The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn: The orders made on the 27th of February and on Thursday last discharged; and Bill committed.

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH (CARDIFF) BILL [H.L.]

The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn: The orders made on the 28th of February and on Thursday last discharged; and Bill committed.

PORTSMOUTH CORPORATION BILL [H.L.] (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION.)

Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Friday next.

**METROPOLITAN WATER COMPANIES
BILL.**

Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Friday next.

**WORKINGTON CORPORATION WATER
BILL [H.L.] (PETITION FOR ADDI-
TIONAL PROVISION).**

Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Friday next.

**METROPOLITAN WATER COMPANIES
BILL.**

To be read second time on Friday next.—(The Lord James of Hereford.)

**GLASGOW CORPORATION (GAS AND
WATER BILL [H.L.]**

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on the 27th of February and the 23rd of March last discharged; and Bill committed for Tomorrow.

**HULL, BARNSELEY, AND WEST RIDING
JUNCTION RAILWAY AND DOCK BILL
[H.L.]**

Read third time, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

CROWBOROUGH DISTRICT GAS BILL.

Reported with amendments.

ST. DAVID'S WATER AND GAS BILL.

Reported with amendments.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

JOURNAL COMMITTEE.

Report from, That the one hundred and thirtieth volume of the Journals (61st and 62nd Vict. 1898), with an Index, was ready for delivery; read, and ordered to lie on the Table; and the said volume ordered to be delivered in the same manner as the preceding volumes of the Journals have been delivered.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Reports and papers relating to the training colleges of Scotland, for the year 1898.

FISHERIES (SCOTLAND).

The Seventeenth Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1898: Part I.

AGRARIAN OUTRAGES (IRELAND).

Return for the quarter ended 31st March 1899.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACTS.

1. Treasury Minute, dated 18th April 1899, granting a retired allowance to Andrew Lea Elvins, lithographer in the Statistical Office (London) of the Commissioners of Customs, under section 2 of the Act of 1887;

2. Treasury Minute, dated 15th April 1899, declaring that William Reynolds, second mate on the Revenue cruiser "Vigilant," in the Service of the Commissioners of Customs, was appointed without a civil service certificate through inadvertence on the part of the head of his department.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act) and ordered to lie on the Table.

**IMPERIAL MARKETS AND STORES BILL
[H.L.]**

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read, and discharged.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.**BOARD OF EDUCATION BILL.**

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That this Bill be read a second time."—
(*The Lord President of the Council.*)

***LORD REAY:** My Lords, I take it that the object of this Bill is to secure that the functions performed by the State in connection with education should be performed by administrators directly subordinate to *one* authority. The Education Department created under this Bill will take charge not of a section, but of our whole educational system. This does not, of course, mean that under this Bill our educational system is to be centralised. What I understand to be the object of the Bill is that the Department will no longer be hampered by agents, each acting independently, but that it will put these various agents on such a footing that they will submit to the head of the Department not isolated proposals for developing this or that branch of education, but proposals the result of careful consideration by all the Departments which may be concerned. At present we have no Secondary Education Department. Such a department is indeed necessary. Neither the Science and Art Department nor the Department dealing with Elementary Schools has been created with a view to dealing with secondary education. The only agency which has had to consider the question of secondary education is that of the Charity Commissioners. From an administrative point of view you require an elementary department and a secondary department working in perfect harmony. Whether the secondary department should include technical education, or whether a special department should deal with technical education, especially in its higher developments, is not of such great importance as the condition I would impose, that, if you create a technical department, it should be closely connected with the two other departments. If the Board of Education is to give proper guidance to the country, it is necessary that between the

various administrative departments of the Board there should be the same correlation as exists between those of other Government offices. A permanent secretary will, I suppose, be appointed in order to secure this end. Continuity in our education is essential; we do not want uniformity. We have to establish between our elementary and secondary schools, and between the latter and the universities, by properly graded curricula, relations which will secure a minimum of waste in each category. You have to deal with three main categories of scholars—those who will receive only elementary education, those who will receive in addition secondary education, and those who will proceed to the universities. For elementary education we have the limit of age of the Free Education Act placed at 15. That limit coincides with the age at which scholars leave higher grade schools, and that Act recognises the need for free education up to that point. Any agency, therefore, whether School Board or Voluntary school, which provides free education to children under the age of 15, is clearly acting in conformity with the letter of that Act, and the Education Department does not throw any obstacles in the way of those who try to fulfil the duty imposed by the Legislature. But the Science and Art Department, lately at all events, gives a different interpretation to the Act, as far as School Boards are concerned. The result is that in a school called a higher grade school, under the Education Department, every encouragement is given to develop the teaching, to adapt it to the requirements of the scholars; the teachers are not hampered by examinations, and have the benefit of the Superannuation Act of last Session; and the education is free; whereas in the other school which comes under the South Kensington Department you are asked to charge fees, you are hampered by examinations, and the teachers have not the benefit of the superannuation grant. Now I ask: is there any reason why this distinction should be made by the two departments, and why parents of the same class should be charged fees for the education of their children in one school and not in another? The Science and Art Department was intended to promote, by its grants, scientific teaching for the class which could not pay fees.

The result must inevitably be that the connection with the Science and Art Department will be severed, and that the School of Science will lose the grant from the Science and Art Department, but will continue to give the same education, with the approval of Whitehall. If you had the unity of control, which this Bill is going to establish, such anomalies could not occur. Higher grade schools are, as the Secondary Education Commissioners have stated,

"so distinctly offshoots of the elementary system that it may be cogently argued that that system will, without them, lose much of its efficiency and all its completeness."

For purposes of administration, it will be well to leave the higher grade schools under the supervision of the Elementary Department of the Board of Education, which has hitherto dealt with them. These schools are intended to prepare boys for immediate service in the lower ranks of commerce and industry, and the instruction given in them will be different in character as well as in degree from that which is given in the ordinary secondary schools. My Lords, the organisation of secondary education which this Bill contemplates is undoubtedly a very complex problem. The Secondary Education Commissioners, in a Report which has contributed so much to the solution of this problem, I think wisely, did not draw a line of demarcation between secondary and technical education. The solid foundation of a general secondary education is essential before any attempt is made to specialise. It need not be conducted on the same lines. The future career of the scholar must be taken into account. Classics will predominate in the general education of many professions, science in that of manufacturers and agriculturists, modern languages in that of merchants, and out of modern languages, properly taught, you can draw the same discipline of mind which accrues from the study of classics. Having laid that foundation, you can develop technical education. You cannot graft secondary education on technical education, but you can graft technical education on general secondary education. Technical education for our industries has certainly had, during recent years, a great impulse given to it. It requires constant improvement, and in its highest stages of applied science the universities have

to deal with a demand which will tax their resources to the utmost. It is from them that our great industries must draw the brains which will enable them to grapple successfully with foreign rivals, who are at present reaping the full benefit of the vast expenditure on technological institutes. The needs of agriculture in this respect have been recognised by some of our universities, and the scepticism with which scientific agricultural education has been viewed hitherto is gradually disappearing, because it is now recognised that science contributes to a more discriminating use of capital and a corresponding decrease in the cost of production. The best instance of that is perhaps to be found in Denmark. Unless education in rural districts keeps in touch with the requirements of agriculturists, the result must be to increase the migration of the rural population into our towns. Since the Secondary Education Commissioners have issued their Report, the subject of commercial education has become more and more a prominent topic. A widespread feeling of anxiety prevails amongst the commercial classes of the country that our merchants have not received the education which will enable them to meet the severe and ever-growing competition which they encounter in foreign markets. Consular and Board of Trade Reports have increased this uneasiness. Chambers of Commerce—the London Chamber especially—have been active in their endeavours to apply remedies. The London Technical Education Board have issued a Report which contains most valuable matter. But it will be well to bear in mind an observation of Mr. Powell in his Consular Report, that the increase in the commercial prosperity of Germany was due in the first place to the high state of its *general* education, and that the great development of special schools is rather a result than a cause of commercial success. I do not think that we need share the fear which has been expressed in some quarters that the Board of Education will be tempted to stereotype certain types of schools or to lay down model curricula. A Secondary Education Department, enjoying the confidence of governing bodies and of teachers, will exercise—in a different way—the same beneficial influence on the secondary education of the country as has undoubtedly been exercised on its

elementary education by the existing Department. It will have to give encouragement to a great variety of schools, but it will keep in view the chief aim of secondary education: to increase the resourcefulness of the individual, to train his faculty of grappling with the realities of actual life; and for Englishmen these realities are spread over such a vast area that, more than any nation, we require versatility in our educational methods. One of the most important functions of the Education Board will undoubtedly be the control of expenditure. At present the Education Department, the Board of Agriculture, the Science and Art Department, the Charity Commissioners, the county councils, the school boards, and the parents all contribute to the expenditure on secondary and technical education. The Secondary Education Commissioners have indicated very clearly that

"two things seem to characterise the present situation: (1) the variety of the sources, national and local, whence money can be drawn for scientific and technical education; (2) the multitude of bodies through which and by which it can be spent."

They are of opinion that

"the most advantageous and economical line of policy is for the central authority to spend in an increasing degree through the local; but, in order to regulate and harmonise its aim and policies, the central must be a united authority. For only as it is this can co-ordination be promoted in the provincial or educational districts."

Unless, therefore, a central authority exercises supervision, it is quite clear that the administration by various authorities of sources of income which are not equally distributed must lead to waste in some localities, and to insufficient school accommodation in other districts, without endowments or spending the grant under the Local Taxation Act on relief of rates. An adjustment of the funds which are available is only feasible by a central authority, after a survey of the needs existing in towns as well as in rural districts. It is generally admitted that the grant under the Local Taxation Act should be *wholly* devoted to secondary education, and that the grants now distributed by the Science and Art Department should be available for secondary education. If endowments are taken into consideration, the Board

of Education will have under its direct and indirect control a capital which, supplemented by local resources and fees, ought to enable it to raise the standard of secondary education. Although local authorities will have the more immediate responsibility of spending the money, the taxpayer who contributes it is justified in expecting that a central authority should exercise supervision, in order that the local authorities should spend in accordance with educational requirements, and so as to secure a proper continuity in the different grades and categories of schools. I have mentioned fees, and I do not see any reason why parents who can afford to give their children an education beyond the age of 15 should not pay for it. Where exceptional intellectual gifts justify the ascent of what is called the educational ladder by those who have not the means, it should be promoted by the offer of scholarships. In the constitution of the consultative committee the Bill follows in some respects the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commissioners. I am not prepared to dissent from the arguments used by them in order to show the value of the advice which the Board of Education might obtain from the representatives of the universities and of the teaching profession. The sense of responsibility for the advice thus given would give it weight, and such a committee would in no way weaken, as is feared in some quarters, the responsibility of the President of the Board to Parliament; but it would keep him in touch with expert opinion. I attach very great importance to the opinions of those who will be the employers of the men trained in the secondary schools—the heads of commercial houses, of industrial works, and of agricultural enterprise. Their judgment on the results of secondary education, general as well as technical in its various branches, will be of the greatest value to the Department and to the teachers; and an exchange of opinion between them and the educational experts in the consultative committee would tend to keep the supply of secondary education up to the level of the demand. On the one hand, the Board of Education will receive representations from chambers of com-

merce, of agriculture, and from the industries, which are sure to increase as the need of scientific guidance will be more and more realised. On the other hand, the various associations of teachers will lay their claims before the Board. To focus the variety of appeals, to lead them into a proper channel, the consultative committee will be a very careful body, although purely consultative. The presence of men engaged in applying science to business will be a recognition of the practical results of the work done in our secondary schools, and will infuse life into the debates of this consultative committee, and avoid the risk that the committee will take a purely professional view of what is closely connected with the business of the country. In order that this Bill may achieve what it is intended to accomplish, it will be clearly necessary that it should lead to the speedy establishment of a Secondary Education Department, which should be responsible for *all* branches of secondary education. The present system, which gives to the Science and Art Department, to the Charity Commissioners, and to the Board of Agriculture a share in the management of secondary education, must inevitably lead to confusion. The Secondary Education Commissioners recommended the absorption of the Science and Art Department, which has already taken effect in Scotland. This Bill enables the Board of Education to adopt that recommendation. I cannot conceive why a Department which is on the eve of its dissolution should have introduced very important alterations in its rules and in the conditions under which its grants have been hitherto distributed. When you are creating a new machinery, as is done by this Bill, it seems rational and natural that meanwhile the old machinery should not be galvanised into fresh efforts. This Bill does not deal with the thorny question of the constitution of local authorities. I think that it was prudent to reserve the subject for future legislation. But as a result of this reservation the controversy which has arisen with reference to clause 7 of the Directory should have been avoided, and legislative action should not have been forestalled by administrative measures which have accen-

Lord Ray.

tuated in a period of transition the defects of dual administration. I trust that the right interpretation of the Bill with regard to the transfer of the powers of the Charity Commissioners is that in matters which relate to education the Board of Education will in future exercise those powers. I gather from the noble Duke's speech on the First Reading that the transfer will be gradual, but that the inspection of endowed schools under schemes framed by the Endowed Schools Commissioners will at once be transferred to the Board of Education. I also infer from the speech of the noble Duke that the framing of new schemes, which at present has been stopped, will be carried out under new regulations, which I trust will follow in the main the recommendations made by the Secondary Education Commissioners. Through the endowed schools, the Board of Education will be able to exercise a direct and great influence on the whole organisation of secondary education, of which, in some parts of the country, they form a most important element. To establish a proper co-ordination between endowed schools and other schools the intervention of a central authority is essential. I take for granted that such control as is now exercised by the Board of Agriculture over education will be transferred, as it has been in Scotland, to the Board of Education. General inspection, the noble Duke has told us, will be welcome, but would be hardly practicable. I readily admit that the duty of inspection of secondary schools will have to be discharged by specially competent men, and that it may be difficult to find them, but when a school receives a grant from public funds, inspection is the only means by which you can test how these funds are applied, and if you are to inspect State-aided and endowed schools you will be able to utilise the staff of inspectors for the benefit of schools which are not rich. We can, I believe, give satisfaction to the educational needs of our commercial and industrial classes without in any way losing the best features which have hitherto distinguished English education. Initiative, self-control, independence of character, a sense of personal responsibility, should

be quickened, whatever may be the curriculum of a school. But these qualities will not compensate our merchants and our manufacturers for the lack of knowledge which their rivals are applying in their business. The Education Department, through their Intelligence Branch, have given us three volumes of admirable special Reports. For this warning note the greatest credit is due to Mr. Sadler and Mr. Morant. The country feels the need of firm guidance. If the new Board of Education makes use of the materials which have accumulated in order to build up ultimately a fabric of education which will enable the country to feel satisfied that future generations will be properly equipped for the burdens which they will have to bear, this Bill will not have been passed in vain.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY:

My Lords, I do not think it is possible for any one of us who has taken much interest in the education of this country, and still less for any one of us who has himself taken any part in carrying on that education, not to rejoice, and rejoice exceedingly, at the appearance of this Bill. It is the first attempt to do what, in my judgment, ought to have been done something like five and twenty years ago, because through all that time our educational system has been suffering from the want of that completeness which is really necessary in order that any part of it should be as good as it can be. A great many vested interests which have, for one thing, grown up during that time will cause a considerable amount of difficulty in dealing with the matter; but I think the Bill promises to give us the means of dealing with all these difficulties most effectually, and I think we owe a great deal to the pains and care which have been bestowed upon its preparation. But at the same time there are certain matters which, I think, require particular consideration. Your Lordships will not wonder that I should speak, especially on behalf of religious education under this Bill. It is not that I claim for the Church of England anything in the nature of special treatment. I do not ask that any preference should be given to the Church as distinct from any other religious body, but I do ask that we shall not fancy we are pro-

moting the cause of religious equality, if we understand by religious equality the absence of religion from our schools as much as we can possibly keep it out—for that is very often the interpretation given to the phrase “religious equality”—and we cannot help feeling a considerable amount of anxiety, when a Measure of this kind comes before us, that the troubles which attend the controversial question of religious education in our schools may induce statesmen to avoid everything like controversy by simply leaving the whole of this matter entirely to what may be called the operation of chance forces. I therefore want to call attention to two or three clauses of the Bill, but at the same time I should not like it to be supposed that I do not most heartily welcome the Bill, or that I have any desire to make its progress through the House difficult. In the first place, I wish to call attention to the transfer of the powers of the Charity Commissioners in all matters relating to education to this new Board. The Charity Commissioners act under two sets of Statutes in regard to education. One is called the Charitable Trusts Acts, and the other the Endowed Schools Acts, and there are considerable powers given under both sets. The powers given under the Charitable Trusts Acts are in one most important particular far greater than those given under the Endowed Schools Act, because under the Charitable Trusts Acts the Commissioners have the power to deal, almost without any control or any safeguard, with all educational endowments of less than £50 a year. There is no such power given under the Endowed Schools Act; and in dealing with such endowments, I think it would be far better that the matter should be in the hands of a judicial or semi-judicial body such as the Charity Commissioners rather than in the hands of a political department such as the proposed Board must necessarily be. I do not object at all to the character of the Board of Education. I think that it will be a great gain that it should be under the Government of the day; but I think there are certain matters which require different handling than that which they are likely to receive under the new Board, which will simply represent what is most popular at the moment it acts. Many of these endowments are used for elementary education, and I am

sure it would be a mischievous thing in many cases to transfer them to secondary education. Yet I think the temptation to do so will be very considerable indeed. Therefore I should prefer very much if clause 2 were amended in some way so as to leave to the Charity Commissioners the powers which they exercise under the Charitable Trusts Acts, and not to refer those powers to the new Board which we are now to create. This is a matter which, of course, if it is to be discussed at all, will properly be discussed at the Committee stage of the Bill, but I think it well to take this opportunity of pointing out what seems to me to be important in this part of the Bill, in order that when we come to the Committee stage it will have been considered. I think very careful consideration ought to be given to clause 3, the inspection clause, which is also of the very gravest importance. It is not made clear who is to pay for this inspection, or whether the Board of Education is or is not to give inspection to private secondary schools. I presume from the language used that the Board of Education is to inspect private as well as endowed grammar schools, and any schools which the Board may itself create. But it would be a serious mistake—and the matter, as I say, is not quite clear—if in our new secondary system of education we were to ignore the great body of private schools. I was a member of the Schools Inquiry Commission 30 years ago, and at that time the private schools, generally speaking, were not very good. But I have kept up my acquaintance with a great many of them since then, and I do not hesitate to say that the improvement in them has been very marked indeed; that a great many of them are really very good schools; that they ought to be encouraged; and the best encouragement they could possibly receive would be to allow them to obtain inspection on the same terms as any of the other schools. I think it is also important that we should see that schools which give religious instruction should not be hindered from getting inspection on the same terms exactly as schools which do not give religious instruction. I do not think it is at all wise or just to exclude schools simply on the ground that they are giving religious instruction, or without excluding them to put a kind of fine on them by

making them pay for inspection. I think that ought to be made clear in the clause. In regard to the powers given to county councils or borough councils to apply for the purpose of inspection, I think it ought to be secured that here also schools ought not to suffer in fines of this kind, because they give some particular form of religious instruction. I do not want any distinction between Church schools and any other schools, but I say the fact that of a school giving the religious instruction required by the members of a particular religious body ought not to exclude it from receiving whatever benefit may be given by inspection by thoroughly competent officers. I am well aware that this is a matter which raises a good deal of heat whenever it is mentioned. But, nevertheless, it seems to me of very grave importance, and I do not think it is possible for anyone who really understands the importance of the matter not to feel that this is a thing which should not be lightly passed by. The county councils at present are able, out of what is called the beer money, to give grants of various kinds, but they are precluded from giving grants to any secondary school that is run for profit or that belongs to any particular denomination. All of these private schools are, of course, run for profit, but if they are willing to come within the jurisdiction of this new Board, I do not at all see why they should be told they must stay outside because they are private schools. They have to exist somehow or other, and it is greatly to the interest of this country that if they exist, they should have that inspection which is a guarantee that they are really doing their work properly. You will not get any other guarantee. It is better that they should be good schools than that they should be bad schools. The whole matter of inspection is of such great importance that I hope the Government will not be unwilling to take it into very serious consideration. I will just advert to one special point which has been mentioned in this House before on the occasion of discussions on education, and that is in reference to the schools of the highest rank, the public schools, so called by the special Act passed to regulate them. These are admittedly the very best schools of their kind; they are unquestionably such schools as any country

would desire to maintain; and the reason why they are so good is because that in education the formation of character is the important thing—that if you can turn out young men from schools with high principles, a strong sense of duty, and a real determination to do that duty to the best of their ability, you have done more for them than if you had taught them any amount of knowledge, whatever that knowledge may be. And when you think of that—for it is a truth that will bear pondering upon a good deal—you cannot help thinking also of the immense effect which real religious education of the best kind must have in the formation of character. If we create a system which is to exclude or to put obstacles in the way of religious education, we shall certainly do far more harm to the future generations of this country than we shall do good by making their merely intellectual teaching better than it is at present. The consultative committee seems to me, on the whole, likely to be a very useful body, but at the same time, it is impossible to deny that its formation must be very carefully watched, and I do not see that we have quite sufficient information to lead us to any clear conception of what this consultative body may be like. There is a little tendency to make it a consultative body simply of experts. I am always, I confess, a little afraid of uncontrolled experts. There is a little risk that they may sacrifice very important matters to what they consider to be the best mode of giving instruction, and I am not at all sure that the consultative body would not be very strongly driven in the direction of shutting out that terribly controverted matter—religious education—as much as they possibly could. I think there ought to be some care taken in framing the constitution of that consultative committee, and I was very glad indeed to hear the noble Lord who sat down just now say that he looked upon it as of some importance that in this consultative committee there should be representatives not only of those who are interested in education in the sense of knowing something about it, but of those who are interested in education in the sense of seeing quite well what they want to get out. The consultative body if carefully framed will, I think, be of

very great value indeed. I think it is a very good thing that the Minister of the day should be thus brought into touch with leading men who know a great deal about this matter. I doubt very much, however, whether the first subject that is to be put into their hands—namely, the framing of regulations for the registration of teachers—will be dealt with better than the Board of Education would deal with it. I do not feel at all satisfied that the Board of Education without any consultative committee would not make as good, and most likely a better, register than this consultative committee. But to the committee's being there to be consulted I can imagine only one objection, and that is, if the President of the Board of Education allowed his own responsibility to be hidden behind this consultative body as a kind of shelter. It is absolutely necessary that the Board of Education, if there is to be a consultative committee, should consult it, and they will gain a great deal by consulting it; but the consultative committee ought never to become, instead of a consultative committee, a regulative Committee with independent powers. The only thing besides this which I wish to notice is that under clause 5, which orders that—

“Any Order made under this Act shall be laid before each House of Parliament for not less than four weeks during which that House is sitting before it is submitted to Her Majesty in Council.”

This does not give either House of Parliament a power of interference. Now, I do not think it will be at all wise that we should not have the same power of interference that we have had in other educational schemes. I think, if this House or the other House deliberately concludes that a certain scheme is not a wise one, that they ought to have the power of saying so and of stopping that scheme from any further progress. The clause as it stands gives neither House any power of doing anything at all. I do not think that that is at all a wise course to take, considering our past experience in this matter, and I hope the Government will not be unwilling to alter that clause so as to enable either House of Parliament to stop schemes which, in their judgment, are not really in accordance with the best interests of

the nation, and perhaps not really in accordance with the spirit of the law. I have pointed these things out, because it is better, I think, that anything which is to be brought before the House in Committee should have a public expression at once. At the same time I should not like it to be supposed that I have any hesitation in supporting the Bill, or that I intend in any way whatever to damage its progress through both Houses. I earnestly hope it may become an Act as soon as possible.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: My Lords, my first and strongest feeling in considering this Bill is, I confess, a sincere regret at the limitations under which it is prepared. I had hoped that we might at last have arrived at the time when it would have been considered by Her Majesty's Government possible to deal with the question of secondary education as a whole. The Secondary Education Commission, as your Lordships recollect, laid before Parliament in the year 1895 a very full and able Report upon that subject, and I, for one, My Lords, quite agree with the most reverend Prelate who has just sat down in thinking that that question ought to have been dealt with even long before the Secondary Education Commission was appointed. The Report of the Commission has now been for four years before Parliament, but nothing has been done upon the subject, and nothing is really going to be done, even if this Bill becomes law, as I have no doubt it will, possibly with some amendments. Nothing will be done in this matter of Secondary Education by this Bill except rendering the Education Department more fit to deal with that and with all the other parts of its work. Now, my Lords, the time at which we have arrived is one which renders it most urgent to settle this question of secondary education. Your Lordships doubtless will have observed, if you listened to the interesting speech of my noble Friend who opened this Debate, how entirely the question of secondary education was filling his thoughts as it is filling the thoughts of us all. I will not follow him in the description which he gave of the present state of things in regard to that matter, but the difficulty of dealing with this question of secondary education is increasing year by

year. The county councils of this country have a large sum of money—appropriately called beer money—to deal with exclusively for technical education. If you want to make secondary education effective you ought to withdraw this restriction and allow county councils to deal with that money for secondary education generally, and not only for one half of it, however important that half may be. The evil of these limits is that when we give the county councils wider powers there will be scarcely any of the money left to be distributed for the general purposes of secondary education without withdrawing it from the technical schools to which it is now given. I should have thought the present Session peculiarly convenient for the introduction of a secondary education Bill. There is no large Measure of public interest to the whole of the country before Parliament this Session, as far as I know, and there would therefore have been room and scope enough to have taken up this question, although I admit it is one of considerable difficulty. But, instead of doing this, my noble Friend the Lord President of the Council has again confined his Bill solely to the purpose of reconstructing the Education Department. I do not deny that that is a very important subject, or that the Education Department and the various other Departments which deal with public education in this country require consolidation and reorganisation. But the size of the Bill, the very number of its clauses, indicates that you might have carried out this reorganisation at the same time that you dealt with the general subject of secondary education, and made your work complete. As far as I read the Bill it seems to me that not only has secondary education not been dealt with this year, but it is not to be dealt with next year, for the Bill is not to come into operation until April 1, 1900, that is, at a period of the Session when it would be impossible to prepare any Secondary Education Bill that could be passed in that Session. We may cherish hopes that something may be done in 1901, but that, I think, will be a very unpropitious moment for dealing with this question, as it will be on the eve of a General Election, and this is a question which ought to be dealt with by any Government in the most im-

partial manner possible. Now the establishment of local bodies of secondary education will involve many difficult questions. I need not point out that to Her Majesty's Government, because they wrecked their large Education Bill of 1896 very much upon the question of areas. That is a very delicate question, and it will be a peculiarly delicate question on the eve of a General Election, and I venture to say, therefore, that I greatly doubt whether, if the noble Duke is in office at that time, in spite of the alarming hints he gave to the country a short time ago, which we all heard with so much regret—if he is in office at that time I very much doubt whether he will have the strength and power to bring in a contested Secondary Education Bill on the eve of a General Election; and, therefore, my Lords, the question will be postponed indefinitely. The Education Department is to be reconstructed, but we do not know, and we have no assurance whatever of the time when that reconstructed Department will be in such a position as to enable the introduction of a Secondary Education Bill. I greatly regret that the noble Duke, in his speech in bringing in the Bill, seemed to give as a reason for the postponement of the matter that he was going to have a Departmental Committee to inquire particularly into what should be done with the Science and Art Department. We have had Committees on the Science and Art Department before, and we had one last year or the year before.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Duke of DEVONSHIRE): Only on Museums.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: Still that is a large part of the question. If it is necessary to have another inquiry into the Science and Art Department, why does the noble Duke wait so long? Why cannot he begin his inquiry? He knows that the principle of this Bill, the bringing together of all the scattered Departments which now have to deal with education is sure to pass. Nobody will object to it, and therefore surely the noble Duke might begin his inquiry at once, and put himself into a position by which he would be able to bring a Bill into operation at the earliest possible period. I

do hope, when we get into Committee, the noble Duke will consider that matter, and at least let the Bill come into operation on the 1st January, instead of 1st April, so that there may be some hope of something being done next Session. That is the great criticism which I venture to make—that the Bill is inadequate; that it is unduly restricted and will not satisfy the hopes and wishes of the country, because it does nothing practically as regards the improvement of our system of secondary education. With regard to the construction of the Board, I feel bound to say that in my opinion it would have been much simpler to have had a Minister instead of a Board. All those who have been in office know what these sort of Boards are. You put upon them the Secretaries of State and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Secretaries of State are all too busy, and do not want to have any responsibility beyond their general responsibility as Cabinet Ministers, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer will exercise his financial control, not on this Board, but at the Treasury. It would have been better not to have created any Board, but to have a Minister in one House and a Secretary representing him in the other. The Bill differs in respect to the transfer of the powers to the Charity Commissioners from the Bill which was presented last year. The latter would have effected a certain transfer at once, but it was mischievously limited. I am glad that the limit has now disappeared, but the amalgamation of these scattered Departments will not be effected by this mere passing of the Bill. It will be in the power of the new Board of Education to take from the Charity Commissioners one by one and piecemeal—a little here and a little there—their educational powers, but nothing will be done at once, and nothing will be done apparently upon a general system. I think that is a mistake. I myself think if you are going to make this consolidation, you ought to make it at once, and hand over the whole of the educational powers of the Charity Commissioners to the new Board of Education without delay, and in that connection I do not share the views expressed by the most reverend Primate. On the contrary, I desire to see all the educational powers of the Charity Commissioners passed

over as soon as they may be to the Education Department. The most reverend Primate spoke of these powers as judicial. I have heard them spoken of as *quasi* judicial, and I have heard objection taken to handing over such powers to a Government Department; but I am content to rest my opinion on that of Lord Davey, who, in his evidence before the Secondary Education Commission, gave his opinion that, as a lawyer, there was no difficulty in effecting a transfer. As to inspections, I have nothing to say upon that clause, and should have said nothing upon it had it not been for what fell from the most reverend Primate. I am afraid he is very suspicious of his friends on the Treasury Bench. I see nothing in the Bill to indicate any intention of excluding any schools because of their religious teaching, and I do not think there is any such exclusion as the most reverend Primate appears to anticipate. With regard to the consultative committee, on the whole I am glad that it is going to be established, but I am glad only on one condition, which I believe to be the intention of the Government—namely, that the responsibility of the Minister will be thereby in no way diminished. The Minister is the person to whom we must look in Parliament, and to whom the country will look, for the administration of the Department. I should be glad to see him aided by experts, though I share to some extent the dread of the most reverend Prelate that experts should rule. But so long as you have a Minister responsible, I think it is well that he should be aided by persons of large experience in educational matters. I have at this stage of the Bill no further observations to offer, but I would very earnestly ask my noble Friend if he cannot expedite the time when this Bill is to come into operation. It is a great disappointment to find that no large step is to be taken in regard to the reorganisation of our Secondary Education. I may assure him that there is the strongest feeling on the part of the country upon this subject, and as I fear that if this opportunity is lost, and if next year is lost too, it will not easily recur, I would venture to press both upon the Government and the House to consider whether it is not possible to expedite the process under this Bill.

Marquess of Ripon.

*THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER : My Lords, I should like to be allowed to add my testimony to that which has been borne by almost all who are interested in secondary education in this country, and, above all, to the testimony which has been borne to-night by the most reverend Primate, to whom no living man has a parallel experience with regard to the varied departments of educational work in England, as to the value of this Bill and as to our gratitude for its introduction. The Bill is necessarily partial and tentative, but it is an instalment of larger things. I venture, with all respect to the noble Marquess opposite, to differ from him as to the disadvantage of introducing such a Bill in a partial and limited form. To my mind it is a perilous thing to face the difficulties of this matter at all, and only by degrees is there any prospect of arriving at the desired solution. If the Measure is not an heroic one, it is what is probably a good deal better—an eminently practical one at the present time. The first of its three objects is the consolidation of control at head-quarters, and I am surprised to learn that any wide difference of opinion should be supposed to exist outside with regard to the desirableness of such consolidation. Had I needed convincing, the noble Duke's words would have been to me quite conclusive as to the paramount necessity of putting an end to the cumbrous and complex machinery by which the tripartite authority now deals with educational matters. That the entire control should be in the hands of one responsible body at head-quarters seems to me a necessity so obvious that argument is scarcely required. The second great scheme or limb of the Bill is the formation of what is described as the consultative committee, and to this point public interest is largely directed. I feel most strongly that before we are asked even to give a Second Reading to this Bill we ought to have a little more light as to what this committee is intended to consist of, and, when formed, what will be its actual work. I do not know how many of your Lordships have entered upon the stupendous task of studying the nine volumes which form the Report of the Secondary Education Committee, but those who have done so will have found

that the opinions on this point are as varied as the number of witnesses. Witnesses of such weight and authority as Sir George Kekewich, Sir Henry Longley, and Sir B. Samuelson expressed an opinion adverse to the formation of a consultative committee at all, and the objections which are given are admirably summed up and formulated in the Report of the Commissioners themselves. I think the Commission acted wisely, and that Her Majesty's Government acted wisely, in overriding those objections. The objections, weighty as they were, were amply outweighed by the testimony of the varied bodies of men and the various individuals who expressed a strong opinion that some such committee as this was a paramount necessity if our educational work was to go forward. The moment, however, that we go beyond this we find that there is among the witnesses an almost limitless variety of opinion as to whom the committee shall consist of, what number of members shall be upon it, what its work shall be, and whether it should be compulsory on the Minister to follow its advice or not. The Government has evaded the difficulty of deciding among these disagreeing doctors by merely stating that there shall be such a committee, and not telling us its number, the period for which it is to be appointed, what questions shall be referred to it, or whether the advice it will give to the responsible Minister is to be public advice or private advice. It is of importance that we should have some outline statement on these matters before we can judge of the effect of such a committee. We are told that two-thirds of its members are to be persons representing universities and "bodies interested in education." I am sure it was the draughtsman and not the noble Duke himself—the Chancellor of Cambridge University—who thus differentiated between universities and bodies interested in education. What we want upon the whole subject of this consultative committee is more light. The most reverend Primate has pointed out already to-day some matters upon which it is improbable that a committee of that kind would be either as courageous or as unbiassed as a Minister in his place in Parliament or in his departmental work. But there are other matters of importance which I

should like at least to have some general idea about before I can judge whether or not this consultative committee will, if formed, do the kind of work which I think it ought to perform. What is to be its relation to the Education Department? As far as I understand the wording of the Bill, it will be open to the Board of Education to refer any matter of elementary education, quite as much as secondary education, to this body. If so, we should like to know by what means elementary education in its very different departments is to have its proper representation on that body. Then, again, is the consultative committee to have to do with the financial questions with which all educational matters are so closely involved? I should venture to hope that the questions that are referred to the committee would be of a large and general character rather than specific details about schemes for the management of a particular school or set of schools, or controversial things of that sort. There would be on many occasions a great temptation offered to the Minister to hand over to a body of this kind the responsibility of settling one of those thorny and intricate questions, sectarian or other, which are constantly cropping up in educational matters, and I venture to believe that by no possible scheme that could be devised could we form a committee which could deal so satisfactorily with problems of that sort as does a Minister responsible to Parliament. We are told that the committee will advise with reference to the system upon which the register of teachers is to be framed, but I think the final decision upon the actual registration of individuals would be better kept in the hands of the Minister. Above all, is the advice which that committee gives to be confidential advice or is it to be public advice? There is all the difference in the world. I venture to hope that whatever is asked for from this consultative committee or given by it may be in writing, and be open, if necessary, to inspection when called for, so that we may know what the advice is which the experts have given. I am by no means against the formation of this consultative committee. I believe it may do a great deal of good if wisely constructed, and if its powers are properly defined. But looking at the

immense difference of opinion among capable men as to the dangers which they saw, or the things which they desired, I think we ought to have more information on the subject before we go further. The points I have referred to may be severally points of detail, more suited for Committee than for this Debate, but, taken in the aggregate, they form practically the backbone of the Bill. The whole country is interested in the formation of this consultative committee, and would like to know what its numerical strength is going to be, and what is the work which will devolve upon it. But, my Lords, perhaps the most important part of the whole Bill is the third division of it, which says that inspection may be provided for all secondary schools. It is impossible but that that must produce vast changes, and I believe it is well that it has been decided to begin, in the first place, by making that inspection entirely voluntary on the part of those who are to come under it. I am sure that the whole of this House and the country must have been impressed by what was said by the noble Duke in introducing this Bill as to the action which has been taken on this particular point by the headmasters of our great public schools. They have shown remarkable spirit in falling in with this proposal in the way they have, and in consenting themselves to come under some system of inspection, not because they are themselves in need of it, but because they feel it would be for the good of education in the country as a whole. The headmasters in thus assenting to co-operate made four conditions—first, that the inspection when it took place should be not such as to reduce everything to rigidity, but that the largest elasticity should be allowed; secondly, that inspection by universities may be taken as equivalent to inspection by the Government. On both those points the Bill seems quite satisfactory. But the headmasters went further. They said they were anxious that the inspectors should be men of the highest educational qualifications, and they also said that the inspection, if compulsory, ought to be gratuitous. I entirely agree with the headmasters that it would be a disaster were the Government to appoint for the carrying out of this Bill inspectors from any but the first ranks of

Bishop of Winchester.

educational men that are to be found in the country. The noble Duke said that would be a costly process, that such men are not numerous, and when found they require to be highly paid. That is, of course, true, but in my opinion no money would be better expended, or would bring in better results to the country as a whole, than money spent upon getting inspectors of the highest educational qualifications. If, for the sake of avoiding the expense of paying the best men, we fall back on men of inferior grade, we shall not merely have less qualified agents for inspecting the schools, but we shall change the character of school inspection as a whole, because the best schools will not ask or consent to be inspected unless the inspectors possess the highest qualifications. My fear is that if the inspectors are men lacking the very highest qualifications, and therefore unsuited for the kind of work that has been suggested for our greatest schools, the schools that will come under inspection will be mainly those that are giving themselves to technical education rather than to a liberal education as a whole. What we desire is to war against the notion that technical education, however good, can ever take the place of a liberal education laid upon broad and massive lines, and I believe the result of our having any but the best men who can be found in England would be to widen the rift between the best schools and those which fall below them in reputation and character. We are in danger of technical education swamping the desire for a liberal education. We all admit the absolute need of increasing and improving our technical education so that we may meet on fair terms our rivals in trade in foreign countries, but it would be an evil day if that encouragement of technical education were allowed to diminish or to swamp, as I think there is a fear it may, the desire for a large and liberal education as a basis on which these technical things may be built. Municipalities especially have been constantly suspected, not unfairly, of being likely to put undue weight upon the kind of education which would immediately and obviously pay, rather than upon a wide and liberal education. It is constantly said that, looking back to the history of the past generation or two, we ought to take Scotland as an example

of what good education can do. It is said that Scotsmen educated in Scotland have been exceptionally successful all the world over. I am a Scotsman myself, but I have not the advantage of having been educated in Scotland, and do not come within that category. But if we look back and try to trace the causes of this peculiar success to the kind of education which was general in Scotland, we find it was the custom there, and has been the custom for generations, to train for a larger market, so to speak, than the local market, and that the large and broad basis upon which education is there built up in all the schools throughout the country has been the reason why men so educated have been exceptionally successful both in England and beyond the seas. Therefore, my Lords, on these grounds I venture to hope that the kind of inspectors who will be appointed will not be mere experts in technical training, but will be such men that the highest and best schools of England will not be ashamed to submit themselves to them in order to have their work overhauled. The fourth condition which was made by the headmasters was that they thought that inspection, being compulsory, ought to be gratuitous. This Bill does not propose that inspection shall be compulsory, and therefore that particular point may not perhaps arise; but I suppose most of us feel that if the inspection, beginning with being voluntary, turns out to be welcomed by so many schools that it becomes practically general, not a very long time will elapse before it will be compulsory. If so, I entirely agree with the headmasters that it ought to be gratuitous. The noble Duke the Lord President of the Council deprecated the idea that we ought to pay from public sources for the inspection of schools which are attended only by the sons of the wealthy classes. I do not think that argument stands good. It would be impossible to differentiate between a school which is fairly able to pay and a school which is not, and I believe we shall only arrive at the right result by making inspection, whenever it becomes compulsory, gratuitous from first to last. If we are to do this thing at all let us do it well. We should appoint the best men, and pay them adequately, and I believe the country will support us in doing so. I hope neither

the noble Duke nor any other Member of this House will think that in these remarks I desire to depreciate the Bill as a whole. I welcome it with all my heart as an instalment, and I look forward to great things which will be by this Bill set on foot, provided that the consultative committee is formed on wise lines and the questions referred to it are not too large and too ambitious. There are questions upon which the public need guidance and information at this moment, and it will be the duty of the new body we are forming to supply it. For example, there is a widespread fallacy with regard to the relation of primary, secondary, and higher education. It is impossible to cut off at a particular moment the education of a boy or girl, and to say that at that moment the one that is going out to work shall stop, and the one who is not shall go on being educated. There is an idea that at the age of 15 a boy or girl who has got a scholarship, but who would otherwise go out to work at that age, can go on to a higher school and will have been properly trained for it up to that point. That is not the case. We must begin a great deal earlier than that age if we are to differentiate between those who are to get the advantages of a higher education and those who are not. That has been marked in the case of Scotland. There have been schools in Scotland in which all kinds of education have been going on side by side. Are your Lordships aware that in the great High School of Edinburgh many members who have sat in this House—more than one occupant of the Woolsack, and at least one Archbishop of Canterbury—have been educated side by side with boys coming from the lowest grade and the lowest homes in Edinburgh? That school goes on to-day, and is under the School Board, and the example serves to show how fallacious is a rough-and-ready comparison drawn between England and Scotland. While I welcome this Bill as a wise beginning, I do not profess to think it goes so far as we must some day go. It goes, however, on the right lines. If much will have afterwards to be added, nothing will have to be cancelled. The Bill is exactly, in my opinion, what we want at this moment, and I hope your Lordships will give it a Second Reading.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I agree very much with some of the remarks made by the right reverend Prelate who has just sat down. I agree especially with him in his observation that it would be an unfortunate thing if in the reorganisation of secondary education we should lose sight of the immense importance of maintaining the general tone of a liberal education, and to allow it to degenerate into mere technical education. I think all who have the interests of education at heart will agree with this view. On the other hand, I must point out that we have suffered greatly in this country from too much neglect of technical education, and the time has come when it is absolutely necessary to reorganise that portion of education efficiently. What you want is not only to lay the foundation of character, not only to give a broad education, which is also of high importance, but especially a better system or co-ordination so as to bring us in a position to compete successfully with those countries where technical education has been carried much further than it has here. What does the Bill propose to do? The speakers have said that they welcome the Bill. I, too, welcome it. You should always welcome small mercies, when you can get them, although you cannot get all you want. The fault I find with the Bill—and here I agree with my noble Friend behind me—is that it is such a small step in advance. There is hardly any subject which has so thoroughly been discussed of late years as the deficiency in our system of secondary education, and I do not think I ever read an abler Report on the subject than that of the last Commission on Secondary Education. I did not read the whole nine volumes, but I read the one volume which contains a complete account of the system of education and the recommendations of the Committee. I have been amazed to see what a complete mass of confusion our whole system of secondary education now is. Well, we were all in hopes that some strong effort would be made to bring the system into line and into some real working order. I remember when my old lamented Friend, Mr. Forster, made a movement to put elementary education into a better condition. He certainly proceeded with considerably more courage and with a larger grasp of the subject than is now

shown in the case of this movement to improve secondary education. We were a strong Government as far as majority was concerned, but we certainly were not stronger than, if as strong as, the Government now in office; but I should really have thought that with the ample material at the disposal of the Government they might have mustered courage enough to bring in some considerable Measure and submit it to the judgment of Parliament and the country. It is not by tentative expedients that you can carry through great reforms. Those who never face the lion in the path will not effect anything considerable. As to the details of the Bill, I do not think that there is any special objection to make. They are to a great extent permissive. The Bill is an improvement, no doubt, as compared to what it was last Session, when, in the very few remarks I made, I expressed the opinion that unless the Charity Commission was more fully dealt with no satisfactory system could be established. This Bill does give a power to the Education Department, whenever it can muster up courage enough or find time enough, to do something with regard to the Charity Commission. I hope when it does make a proposal it will not withdraw that proposal so speedily as some of the proposals with regard to education have been withdrawn. The most reverend Prelate desired that we should reintroduce into this Bill that which I believe to be a most pernicious provision—namely, that any schemes which are prepared may be rejected by a vote of either House. I quite understand why he is so anxious to retain that power, which, if he will allow me to say so without personal offence, I think he and the Bench of Bishops have exercised on many occasions with much damage to the public interest. But I do not think the most reverend Prelate need have been, as far as the present Government is concerned, alarmed upon that point. I feel very little doubt that it will not require a Motion to be carried in this House desiring that any of these proposals or Orders should not be persevered in, but that some slight press of opposition would at once frighten the Education Department into withdrawing the proposal, however much they might think it desirable. I must add this—

speaking very seriously on the point—that I do not quite clearly understand why, even from the most reverend Prelate's point of view, he should be alarmed, because I do not think the Orders are likely to touch those questions concerning which he and the Bench of Bishops feel, I admit, very strongly. The Orders, as I understand the matter, are for the most part administrative Orders, which, while it is right that they should be laid before both Houses, will not raise those thorny questions which are raised by the schemes to which the present practice is applied.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: They are the Orders that are referred to in the previous part of the Bill.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Yes, and they are administrative Orders. I would then make this observation—that although the House would not have the power, which it now has, of absolutely stopping the Orders, yet there is nothing whatever, as far as my belief goes, to prevent either House of Parliament from moving an Address to the Crown in regard to any matter referred to in the Order. The only difference is this—that, no doubt, an Address moved in that manner might have no effect, because the Government of the day might advise Her Majesty not to comply with the desire expressed in the Address. There was another point to which the most reverend Prelate referred, and in regard to which I think he was under some misapprehension. He seemed to us on this side of the House afraid lest schools where there was special denominational education would be excluded from the advantages of this Bill, and especially from the advantage of inspection. I do not understand that the Bill would make any such difference, but that it would be open to the Education Department to admit to the advantages of the Bill any school whatever that might desire to be brought under the operation of the Bill, and that wishes to have the advantage of inspection or any other advantage the Bill might confer upon it. But I understand that what, in point of fact, the most reverend Prelate had in his mind was whether or not it would be a condition of such inspection or such other advantage that there should

be introduced a Conscience Clause into these schools. What I understand to be the recommendation of the late Commission, and the general wish of all those who are interested in the improvement of secondary education, is that we should aim at bringing the whole of the secondary education schools in the country, whether they be endowed schools, or schools which are aided by the technical education grant, or whether they be private proprietary schools, into one co-ordinated system, under which they might be taken into consideration as part of the means in any district where secondary education is to be applied. I do not understand that it was the desire of anyone to exclude any school which it was possible, with their consent, to include. There was one other point which was referred to by the right reverend Prelate who has just sat down—namely, the power of the consultative committee. I rather agree in desiring that, if it were possible, the noble Duke should give a little more information as to what the duties of this consultative committee will be. I clearly understand that the Minister will have the power of rejecting advice that might be given, and it is rather important that we should know how far the consultative committee will be brought into play, because it becomes a more or less important part of the machinery according as to how it is to be used. I was alarmed to hear from the most reverend Prelate that he was afraid that these experts would be all against religious education. I may have differed from the most reverend Prelate upon the action of the Bench of Bishops in regard to certain schemes where the particular education given in an endowed school was in question, but, for my own part, I am not one of those who are adverse to religious education, and I certainly should be very much alarmed at the appointment of the consultative committee if I thought the controversial question of religious education was to be referred to them. I apprehend that that would be about the most difficult duty which could be imposed upon any set of men, and I should certainly doubt whether the experts would be specially qualified to advise on that subject. At the same time I am not so unfavourable to the opinion of experts

on education as to think that they would be adverse to religious education, and I cannot help remembering that the most reverend Prelate himself is no mean expert in education, and certainly if he were upon the consultative committee, and I had the honour of consulting him, I should expect to find him, whilst thoroughly able to advise me on educational matters, able also to advise on matters of religious education. I should not be alarmed on that subject if I were the noble Duke, and I think he might approach the committee of experts without any fear that they would all be persons who would give heterodox or unwise advice on any subject brought before them. I cannot help feeling rather amused at the constitution of the Board. I do not conceive it to be at all probable that the Ministers who are included in this Board ever will meet. I think it is undesirable they ever should meet. I do not attach the slightest importance to the Board. It cannot do any harm. The Board will be the Minister of Education, assisted by the permanent officials. And here I must express my pleasure to see that the very able present Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education is to be retained as a member of the Board, and I can only hope that when he comes to give advice upon secondary education he may be more fortunate in being supported by the Government to which he belongs than he has hitherto been on elementary education.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: My Lords, the criticisms of this Bill have been of two entirely different and, to some extent, antagonistic kinds. Some criticisms have been made by my noble Friend the noble Marquess opposite, and to some extent they were repeated by the noble Earl who has just sat down, relating to the inadequate character of the present Measure. I assume that its inadequacy consists in the fact that it does not propose to deal in any way with the constitution of those local authorities which are now universally admitted to be a necessary element in any complete reorganisation of the system of secondary education. The present Government did, three years ago, attempt to deal with that part of the question, and in the Education

Bill which was introduced in 1896 it was proposed to constitute local authorities which would have been charged, amongst other things, with extensive duties in connection with secondary education in their localities. But I cannot say that that Measure, or even that part of the Measure, received any very enthusiastic support from the noble Lords opposite or from their Friends in the House of Commons; and, although I might think that the objections which they felt to the other portions of the Bill might have been such as to warrant them in offering that Bill the strenuous opposition they did, I scarcely think it lies in their mouth to complain that the Government have shown want of courage in neglecting to deal with this part of the question on the present occasion. The noble Earl asks why we have proposed a Bill which we admit to be of a partial character. I can only state now, as I stated last year, that I thought we had probably not been well advised in the previous Bill in leaving to local authorities those matters which were questions for the central authority, and I pointed out that I did not think, in the absence of any more satisfactory central authority than that which exists at present, or can exist until the Bill is passed, it would be desirable to create such local authorities as could satisfactorily discharge the duties they would have to perform. It is therefore for these reasons that we have deliberately proceeded in this manner. We have thought it desirable, in the reorganisation of secondary education, that the central authority should be in existence before the new local authorities are called into existence, and we think such central authority will be able to give the new local authorities, when constituted, the guidance and advice of which they will stand in need, and that if they were created and came into existence before the central authority it is very probable that additional mistakes would be added to those which I am afraid have already taken place in the matter of secondary education. The noble Marquess opposite constructed a very ingenious argument, by which he endeavoured to prove that because a complete Measure could not be passed next year it was very undesirable that it should take place the year after. Of course, it is not in my power to say what legis-

lation it may be possible for the Government to undertake next Session ; but I am bound to say I do not see that there is any insurmountable reason why a complete Measure dealing with local authorities should not, at all events, be brought in and, I hope, passed next Session. It is not necessary that this central authority should be constituted before the Bill for the creation of local authorities is brought in. All we say is that it is necessary that there should be a central authority in existence when the local authorities are created, and I do not see the absolute necessity for the constitution of a central authority before bringing in a Bill which shall create local authorities. I entirely sympathise with the observations with which the noble Earl opposite concluded on the subject whether the Department should be called a Board, in imitation of the Local Government Board, the Board of Agriculture, or the Board of Trade, or whether it should be a secretariat, as in the case of the Secretary for Scotland.

✓ As far as I remember, the point was mooted when the Bill was first prepared, but I quite admit that I am unable, at the present moment, to recollect the reasons which weighed in favour of a Board rather than a secretariat. It has the advantage, at all events, of numerous precedents, and it is perfectly well understood that there will be no Board at all. There are other criticisms which have been made with reference to the Bill which appear to me to proceed from the opposite point of view, and from persons who have formed an erroneous and exaggerated conception of the scope of the Bill. I do not think in anything I have ever said I can hold myself responsible for any such exaggerated descriptions of the Bill. I have always admitted that it was a small Bill, but, as I thought, an indispensable step in the direction of the reorganisation of secondary education, whether of national or local character. What it does is to create a department which shall be able to take cognisance of, and be competent to deal with, as no department at present in existence is competent to deal with, the problems of secondary education as they arise. The Bill does not profess to lay down the educational policy which this department, not yet created, will undertake when it is formed. Some of the criticism seems,

in my opinion, to have proceeded from an attempt to find in the Bill principles of educational policy which it does not contain. A great deal of misapprehension seems to have been caused by a statement which I made in introducing the Bill upon the subject of the inspection of secondary schools. When I made that statement I was guarding myself against an erroneous impression which appeared, in consequence of certain inquiries which had been made, to have been formed as to the nature of the complete and systematic inspection of all our secondary schools—public, endowed, proprietary, or private—which might be undertaken by the Board. There are, I believe—although the statistics on the subject are not complete—800 public schools and no fewer than 5,000 private and proprietary schools. Many of these are very large and important schools, and anything like a complete and systematic inspection of that number, I pointed out, would require a very large and highly-trained staff, and I went on to state that such a staff, for financial and other reasons, was not likely immediately or for some time to come to be at the disposal of the Education Board. It was necessary in the Bill to take the power of inspecting all such schools as came under the Bill, because without such power the Board would have been unable to undertake even that preliminary and general survey of our educational system which it will be necessary in the first instance for it to undertake in order to determine what is wanted. But there is nothing in the Bill which limits the responsibility which it may in future undertake if we find we are able to succeed in organising a central authority which will inspire general confidence, and which Parliament would be disposed to entrust with the funds necessary for a complete and systematic inspection of all secondary schools, which most of them think desirable. It must have been obvious to your Lordships that I should not be in a position at this stage to ask for the assent of the Treasury to a proposal which might involve a very considerable expenditure, without being able to lay before them far more definite and positive estimates of the probable cost and extent of such an operation than I can now give. I was alarmed at the idea that appeared to be prevalent that we were prepared to at once under-

take this work, and I thought it was necessary to point out the fact that it was not our intention to commence at once. I cannot, however, admit, after the reservation I made on that occasion, that it is doubtful that the question of how far it is the duty of the State to undertake the gratuitous inspection of schools which are mainly for the benefit of the richer classes is one that can be so summarily disposed of as it has been in some quarters. An attempt has been made to set up an analogy between the State inspection, which is conducted by the Science and Art Department, of the schools and classes aided by it, with this proposal for the general gratuitous inspection of secondary schools. Of course, in the case of instruction which is aided by the State, State inspection is an absolute necessity. But the inspection of the innumerable minor schools conferring an education of the same character, but an education which is not primarily connected with either our industrial or commercial interests, the inspection of such schools raises questions of a very different character from those which are involved in the necessary inspection of those institutions which are already directly aided by State grants. I will refer for a moment to one or two questions which have been raised by the most reverend Prelate the Archbishop of Canterbury. I thank him very much for the general support which he has given to this Measure, and I trust I shall be able to remove from his mind any misapprehension as to the dangers connected with religious education which he seems to entertain. I confess I regret that it should have been found necessary to raise the religious question at all in connection with this Measure. It has never, so far as I am aware, been raised in any discussions which have taken place either on my statement last Session or on my statement on the introduction of the Bill this year. I can only find in the Report of the Commission on Secondary Education two references to the religious question. The Commissioners say that the evidence goes to show that difficulties were not found in practice to rise in regard to giving religious instruction in secondary schools or to the presence in the same schools of pupils belonging to different religious denominations. They also point out that the Bishop of London indicated his belief that, under the ex-

isting arrangements, the rights of parents in regard to the religious instruction of their children were respected. That was the opinion of the most reverend Prelate at the time he gave his evidence as to the administration of secondary education under the schemes of the Endowed Schools Commission. There is nothing in this Bill to change, and I know of no intention to change in any respect, the administration of those endowments in the matter of religious instruction, and I therefore do not know why this suspicion should enter into the mind of the most reverend Prelate. He referred also to the proposed transfer from the Charity Commission of their powers under the Endowed Schools Act and the Charitable Trusts Act, calling attention especially to the powers which the Education Department would obtain of transferring small endowments from the purposes of elementary education to the purposes of secondary education, and he thought that those powers ought to remain in the hands of a judicial or quasi-judicial body such as the Charity Commission. I understand that the Charity Commissioners have already the power of diverting elementary endowments which are now used for purposes of elementary education to purposes of secondary education. That they have not often used those powers has been mainly on account of the local opposition which such a proposal almost invariably encounters; and I do not know of any reason why a Government Department are less likely to receive local opposition to their proposals than the Charity Commissioners. But I am advised that the most rev. Prelate is not quite accurate in describing the Charity Commission as a judicial body, and that their functions are in reality neither legal nor judicial, but almost entirely administrative. I am also informed that the notion that the functions of the Charity Commission are of a judicial character is solely derived from the fact that they have inherited certain administrative powers which were formerly exercised by the Lord Chancellor, but that it is not accurate to describe them as of a judicial or a semi-judicial character. The most rev. Prelate referred, as many others have done, to the consultative committee. As to the many points connected with that committee, I trust

your Lordships will be disposed to postpone any detailed explanation until the Committee stage of the Bill. I may say, however, that a sufficient indication of the position of the consultative committee, and the duties to be entrusted to it, is given by the terms of the Bill. But we do not propose that this committee should, as to its constitution, have a statutory character. It is to be the creation of the Minister, who will be responsible for its selection except so far that two-thirds of it is to be representative of educational institutions. Its duties are to be such, and no other, as the Minister who is responsible entrusts to it; and nothing which the consultative committee can do will relieve the Minister of any responsibility for any action it may take. As to an idea of the character of the duties which may be usefully entrusted to it, that will be better given in the Committee stage of the Bill. But I may say at once that there would be insurmountable difficulties in the way of giving to the constitution of the consultative committee any statutory character. I think the most reverend Prelate would like that there should be some security in it of representatives of denominational schools. I know that an attempt will be made to include upon it representatives of the interests of female teachers. If we were to attempt to insert in the Bill any directions more precise than at present exist as to the constitution of this council, I believe we should have pages of Amendments dealing with it placed upon the Paper. Clause 5 of the Bill, which directs that certain Orders proposed to be made under the Bill shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament, refers solely to those Orders in Council by which certain powers are usually transferred from the Science and Art Department to the Education Board or from the Charity Commissioners to the new Board; but these Orders do not contemplate in any way what the most reverend Prelate had in his mind in regard to schemes now made by the Charity Commission. I have now referred to the important subjects to which attention has been called in the course of this discussion, and I shall not detain your Lordships longer than to express my satisfaction at the generally

favourable reception that this Measure, small as I admit it is, has met with from those who are interested in it.

Question put.

Bill read a second time.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: When will the Committee Stage be taken?

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: I will put it down for tomorrow week.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS IN CHURCHES BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That this Bill be read a second time."—
(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: This Bill is identical with the Bill dealing with the subject which I introduced last year, and which met with the approval of the Government and passed through your Lordships' House. That, however, was in the month of July, and it was impossible to proceed with it in the other House. Therefore it is necessary for me to re-introduce the Bill this year. The object of the Measure is to provide that, when Parliament has contributed, either wholly or in part, towards the erection of a national monument in one of our cathedrals or churches, it shall not be possible for that monument to be altered or removed without the assent of Her Majesty, and without Parliament being informed of it. Such power already exists in regard to monuments erected by private persons in our cathedrals and churches, and it is only proper that Parliament should have similar rights.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Viscount Cross): My Lords, on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Home Department I assent to this Bill.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: I think I may also say that there is no objection to the Bill on the part of the Bishops.

Question put.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Friday next.

COPYRIGHT BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That this Bill be read a second time."—
(*Lord Monkswell.*)

***LORD MONKSWELL :** My Lords, before I address the House as to the scope and objects of this Measure I should like to say one word as to the circumstances under which the present Bill comes before your Lordships' House. Your Lordships are aware that numerous attempts have been made to deal in a comprehensive way with the Copyright Law, but none of them have been successful. In 1896 the Society of Authors, having waited 20 years, thought it would be better to attempt a reform of those laws on a more modest scale, and in 1897 they commissioned me to introduce a Bill dealing with the less contentious points and the most pressing reforms. That Bill was read a second time, referred to a Select Committee, and eventually passed by your Lordships, but too late to be considered in the House of Commons. Last year I reintroduced that Bill word for word, but the noble Earl who represents the Board of Trade then objected to it because it was not of a comprehensive character. He objected to any piecemeal dealing with the Law of Copyright. Everybody would rather have a comprehensive Measure than a piecemeal Measure, if only we could get it passed. As far as I am concerned, I did what I could to get a comprehensive reform by a Measure introduced in 1891, which was stopped by the noble and learned Earl on the Woolsack because it was too big. In 1898 my Bill was stopped because it was not big enough. I take that as an indication that Her Majesty's Government are now willing that a comprehensive Measure on the Law of Copyright should be brought before your Lordships' House. Her Majesty's Government having taken that new departure, Lord Herschell, whose death is a most grievous loss to the cause of copyright reform, brought in a large consolidating and amending Measure dealing with literature and artistic copyright. That Bill was referred, together with my own Bill, to a Select Committee of your Lordships' House. That Committee held many sittings, and examined a great many witnesses, but

at the end of the Session the evidence was not quite complete, and it was suggested that the Committee should be reappointed this Session. Lord Thring, however, has kindly drafted a Bill dealing only with literary copyright, leaving artistic copyright to be dealt with by a separate Bill. This is the Bill which I ask the House to read a second time, and refer to a Select Committee. I will explain some of the principal changes proposed in the Bill. The term of copyright is to be the life of the author and 30 years after his death, instead of the present term of the life of the author and seven years or 42 years, whichever should be longer. This life and 30 years is in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee and also the law that obtains in Germany at present. The Bill further makes clear that the translation, abridgement, and conversion of novels into plays constitute an infringement of copyright. Then the law as to ownership of articles in magazines and reviews is altered so as to give authors the copyright after two years from the date of the publication of the article, and also to give authors a concurrent right with owners of reviews to sue for infringement of copyright. The Bill further proposes to make the enforcement of performing rights in dramatic and musical works simpler and more efficient, and to clearly lay down the law in regard to copyright in lectures. With regard to the subject of registration the Bill deals with that in a very simple fashion; it leaves it out altogether. I will read one paragraph on that subject from the Memorandum which Lord Thring has prepared for the use of the Committee—

"I have omitted the clauses relating to registration. Compulsory registration seems to me impossible. One of the great music sellers informed me that he had 20,000 copyrights, and it is obvious that many books, especially sheets of music, which are included under the definition of a book, are of so little value as to make registration of the copyright out of the question. Voluntary registration is useful only for the purpose of giving a *prima facie* title to the owner of the copyright, and that object is better attained by a procedure clause making it necessary for the defendant in a copyright suit, if he disputes the title of the plaintiff, to state the name of the person whom he thinks should be substituted."

The greatest novelty in the Bill is a provision which gives newspapers copyright in news for 12 hours after publication. This is a law already in some of our Colonies. The law as to International Copyright is also brought more in accord with the provisions of the Convention of Berne. Authors have waited long and patiently for copyright reform, and I hope your Lordships will give a favourable reception to this Bill.

Question put.

Bill read a second time, and referred to a Select Committee.

TRAWLERS CERTIFICATES SUSPENSION BILL [H.L.]

To be read second time on Thursday the 4th of May next.

House adjourned at fifteen minutes after Seven of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 24th April 1899.

MR. SPEAKER took the Chair at Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [H.L.] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :—

Cambridge University and Town Gas Bill [H.L.]

Dumbarton Burgh Bill [H.L.]

Great Yarmouth Corporation Bill [H.L.]

West Highland Railway Bill [H.L.]

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS [H.L.] NO STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO APPLICABLE.

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders not previously inquired into are applicable, viz. :—

Arbroath Corporation Gas Bill [H.L.]

Glastonbury Water Bill [H.L.]

Inverness Harbour Bill [H.L.]

Surrey Commercial Docks Bill [H.L.]

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

CHARING CROSS, EUSTON, AND HAMPTSTEAD RAILWAY BILL.

Queen's consent signified.

Read the third time, and passed. [New Title.]

GAS LIGHT AND COKE COMPANY BILL.

To be read the third time to-morrow.

COALVILLE URBAN DISTRICT GAS BILL [H.L.]

Read a second time, and committed.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (SWANSEA) BILL [H.L.]

Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

**LOUGHBOROUGH AND SHEEPSHED
RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]**

Reported, with Amendments; Reports
to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

EDINBURGH CORPORATION BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Reports
to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL
ORDERS (No. 1) BILL.**

Read the third time, and passed.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL
ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.**

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Brentford, Bromley (Kent), Chelmsford, Heston and Isleworth, Ongar (Rural), Reigate (Rural), Twickenham, and Watford (Rural)," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 163.]

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL
ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.**

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Durham (Rural), Eastbourne, Honiton (Rural), Grimsby, Ilfracombe, Lichfield (Rural), Ludlow, and Rotherham (Rural)," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 164.]

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm a Provisional Order, under the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892, reducing the number of

magistrates and councillors in the royal burgh of St. Andrews." [St. Andrews Burgh Provisional Order Bill [H.L.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for empowering the provost, magistrates, and town council of the royal burgh of Kirkcaldy to construct tramways and street improvements, and for making certain other provisions in relation to the said burgh; and for other purposes." [Kirkcaldy Corporation and Tramways Bill [H.L.]

**ST. ANDREWS BURGH PROVISIONAL
ORDER BILL [H.L.]**

Read the first time; Referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 165.]

**KIRKCALDY CORPORATION AND TRAM-
WAYS BILL [H.L.]**

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

BOROUGH FUNDS ACT, 1872.

Petition from Fleetwood, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Halifax, against; to lie upon the Table.

**GROCERS' LICENCES (SCOTLAND) ABO-
LITION BILL.**

Petition of the Scottish Temperance League, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND RENTS (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Petitions in favour;—From Crewe;—St. Pancras;—and, Bradford; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO BILL.

Petition from Middlesbrough, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Fraserburgh;—Paisley;—Abbeymount;—Bridge of Allan;—Crail;—Oban;—Port Ellen;—Perth;—Kirkcolum;—Lerwick;—Westray;—Sandwich;—Gourdon;—Dalbeattie;—Montrose (three);—Galashiels;—Dundee;—Burray;—Govan;—Tillicoultry;—Glasgow (two);—Bervil;—Breachin;—and, Carlisle; to lie upon the Table.

LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL.

Petitions for alteration;—From St. Mary, Newington;—St. James's, Westminster;—and, St. John, Hackney; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Wheldale;—Old Silkstone;—Marlpool;—Rostell;—Swanwick;—Walkmill;—Featherstone Main;—Low Stubbin;—Harrington;—Acton Hall;—Topcliffe;—Birley;—Wharnccliffe;—Robin Hood;—Morton;—and, B. Winning; to lie upon the Table.

NAICKER, C. SOOBAROGO.

Petition of C. Soobarogo Naicker, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.

Petition from Cuckfield, for extension to women; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Crewe, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Nine Elms;—Battersea;—and, Cardiff; to lie upon the Table.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION BILL.

Petition of the Sanitary Institute, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Southend on Sea;—Sheffield;—Middlesbrough (two);—Bardwell;—Sharnbrook;—Brighouse;—Portsmouth;—and, Hanley; to lie upon the Table.

VACCINATION (CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS) BILL.

Petition of the Sanitary Institute, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

WATER SUPPLY BILL.

Petition of the Sanitary Institute, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

REPORTS, RETURNS, ETC.**AGRARIAN OUTRAGES (IRELAND).**

Copy presented—of Return for the quarter ended 31st March 1899 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) (TRAINING COLLEGES).

Copy presented—of Reports and Papers relating to the Training Colleges of Scotland for the year 1898 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented—of Seventeenth Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1898, Part I. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented—of Treasury Minute, dated 15th April 1899, declaring that William Reynolds, Second Mate, Revenue Cruiser "Vigilant," in the service of the Commissioners of Customs, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1887.

Copy presented—of Treasury Minute, dated 18th April 1899, granting to Andrew Lea Elvins, Lithographer in the Statistical Office (London) of the Commissioners of Customs, a retired allowance under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

CHARITABLE ENDOWMENTS (LONDON).

Further Return relative thereto [ordered 2nd August 1894; Mr. Francis Stevenson]; to be printed. [No. 161.]

INQUIRY INTO CHARITIES (COUNTY OF CARMARTHEN).

Further Return relative thereto [ordered 10th February 1898; Mr. Grant Lawson]; to be printed. [No. 162.]

INQUIRY INTO CHARITIES (COUNTY OF ANGLESEY, PARISH OF PENRHOS LLIGWY).

Return relative thereto [ordered 17th April; Mr. Grant Lawson]; to be printed. [No. 163.]

EAST INDIA (SUGAR IMPORTATION AND CULTIVATION.)

Address for "Return showing for each of the years 1882-3 to 1898-9, inclusive: (1) the quantity and the value of imports of Sugar into India from Germany, Austria, and Mauritius; (2) the acreage of Sugar Cane Cultivation in the several Provinces of India; (3) the quantity of refined Indian Sugar exported from Bengal and the North West Provinces to other Provinces in India and to the Native States; and (4) the quantity of Indian Sugar, refined and unrefined, exported to Ceylon, to the United Kingdom, and to other countries."—(*Sir William Wedderburn.*)

NEW WRIT

For the County of Merioneth—in the room of Thomas Edward Ellis, esquire, deceased.—(*Mr. Herbert Gladstone.*)

QUESTIONS.

RE-ARRESTS OF PRISONERS.

Mr. FLOWER (Bradford, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it would be possible, in the case of a prisoner against whom several warrants of commitment have been issued, to have sentences under such warrants carried out consecutively, thus obviating the necessity of a re-arrest, or successive re-arrests, at the prison gate?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir M. WHITE RIDLEY, Lancs., Blackpool): Yes, a warrant of commitment runs from the date on which it is received in the prison where the prisoner is confined, unless the court has made an express order otherwise. If it is lodged there while the prisoner is undergoing a previous sentence, there is no occasion for his re-arrest at the prison gate.

IRISH PRISON ADMINISTRATION.

MR. FLOWER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is intended to introduce a Bill this Session to reform the administration of Irish prisons on the lines of the Prisons Act, 1898.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): I have directed a Bill to be drafted of the nature indicated in the Question, but I cannot say whether it will be possible to introduce it this Session.

RED SEA LIGHTS.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, S.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can state the cause of the prolonged delay in arranging for the provision of lights in the southern part of the Red Sea, now dangerous to navigation?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. ST. JOHN BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): Her Majesty's Government have submitted proposals to the other Maritime Powers that lightships or lighthouses should be established by the Egyptian Government. The Governments so addressed have accepted these proposals, with the exception of France and Russia. The French Government stated in February 1898 that they could not support the scheme, as they had already approached the Porte with a view to the construction of lighthouses. No result has been

obtained. hitherto from the French negotiations at Constantinople, which have now lasted for more than 12 months, but we have not yet succeeded in obtaining the consent of the French Government to our proposal that the lighthouses should be constructed by the Egyptian Government, with the consent of the Sultan.

SIR J. FERGUSSON: Will Her Majesty's Government press this matter forward?

[No reply.]

SIR J. FERGUSSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the reason of the delay in erecting one or more lighthouses for the safety of navigation at the eastern end of the Gulf of Aden, in view of the terrible wreck of the "Aden" steamship in 1897, and of other casualties detailed in a Return made to this House in 1898?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): As I stated in my reply to the right honourable Baronet last year, Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that it would not be advisable to approach other Governments on the subjects of lights in the Gulf of Aden until some settlement has been arrived at with respect to the Red Sea lights. I understand that negotiations as regards the Red Sea lights are still proceeding, though, so far, without any satisfactory result. It is hoped, however, that some progress may shortly be made.

BOARD SCHOOL SWIMMING BATHS.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the fact that the School Board for London and other school boards in the country are providing swimming baths at the cost of the ratepayers; whether such expenditure is legal, and, if legal, is it encouraged by his Department; whether such swimming baths are intended for the exclusive use of the children attend-

ing the Board schools, or whether children attending Voluntary schools within the School Board areas, the supporters of which contribute to the School Board rates, are to be allowed to participate in the use of the swimming baths; and whether, in case the School Boards are unable or unwilling to allow children educated in Voluntary schools to share in the privilege of using the swimming baths, he will endeavour, by legislation or by alteration of the Code, to provide for their admission equally with the School Board children?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION
(Sir J. GORST, Cambridge University):

The answers to paragraphs 1 and 2 are in the affirmative. Swimming is recognised as a subject of instruction under the Code. The School Board will decide in each case whether Voluntary school children are to be admitted to the baths. If any extra expense were caused thereby, the auditor would determine its legality. No alteration of the Code would provide for the compulsory admission of Voluntary school children to such swimming baths. The Government could not undertake at present to legislate on the subject.

ILLITERATE VOTERS IN IRELAND.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can inform the House what is the total number of votes recorded at the recent local government elections in Ireland, and how many of them were by illiterate voters; and whether he will assent to a Return, if moved for, showing the following details, viz., the number of voters and particulars of votes recorded in each constituency?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have no official information as to the number of persons who voted at the recent local government elections in Ireland, or as to the proportion of electors who voted as illiterates. In 1896 a Return was presented to Parliament showing the number of persons who voted as illiterates at the General Election of 1895 in the United Kingdom of Great Britain

and Ireland. I hardly think any useful purpose would be served by the preparation, so soon after the Return of 1896, of the further Return suggested by my honourable Friend, and which, I am informed, would occupy a very considerable time in compiling. Moreover, I am not aware that a Return of literate and illiterate voters has ever been laid on the Table in respect of local government elections in Great Britain, and to lay such a Return on the Table in respect of Ireland alone would appear to me to be open to an invidious interpretation.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOL SUBSCRIPTIONS.

MR. HEDDERWICK (Wick Burghs): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether there has been any falling off in the subscriptions of the supporters of Voluntary schools in England since the Voluntary Schools Act, 1897, was passed; and, if so, whether he can state the total amount of the diminution?

SIR J. GORST: Yes. The amount of the diminution in the year ended August 31st, 1898, as compared with the previous year was £46,961 in Church of England schools, £21,174 in Roman Catholic schools, £2,607 in Wesleyan other undenominational schools—total, schools, and £7,185 in British and £77,927.

MR. McKENNA (Monmouth, N.): Can the right honourable Gentleman say whether he attributes the decline to the effect of the Voluntary Schools Act, 1897?

[No Reply.]

SCOTCH SETTLERS IN MANITOBA.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether all, and how many, settlers at Killarney, Manitoba, are now leaseholders under the Colonisation Board; and will he state for what term leases have been arranged, the acreage, rental, and the entire amount collected in respect of rent for the year 1897-8?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): Practically all the Killarney crofters are now leaseholders under the Colonisation Board. The leases cover eight annual payments, at the conclusion of which the leaseholders become proprietors of their lands. Each holding is 160 acres. The annual payments fixed in the leases vary in amount according to the existing liabilities of the lessee at the time of making the lease. The Colonisation Board has not yet received the Report of the last year, and it is not, therefore, known how much of the rental of 1897-8 has yet been paid, but the latest advices are not very satisfactory.

MINOR LIGHTS IN THE SCOTTISH CONGESTED AREAS.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate, having regard to the statement contained on page 15 of the Report of the Congested Districts Board for Scotland relative to the need of minor lights in the congested area, will he state at what points the Board consider such lights should be fixed?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: The Congested Districts Board have not arrived yet at any final conclusion on the subject.

METROPOLITAN CAB REGULATIONS.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that on Friday, the 14th April, a cab driver who had been engaged to call at Romano's, in the Strand, at 3.30 in the afternoon to take up a fare, was prevented by the police from driving along the Strand, and told that he must either go down on to the Embankment or up into Covent Garden; and whether he will modify the new cab regulations in such a way as to prevent such action on the part of the police?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: Drivers of empty cabs are not prevented from passing along the Strand for the purpose

of keeping engagements there. In the particular case referred to the cabman did not inform the policeman who stopped him that he had an appointment at Romano's, but left his cab in the Strand and went to Bow Street to complain of the action of the police. When it was found at the station that he was engaged, an officer was sent with him to facilitate his reaching his destination.

"JEANNETTE"-“FALKENBERG” COLLISION.

LORD C. BERESFORD (York): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the case of the “Jeannette”-“Falkenberg” collision is settled; if so, whether there is any appeal, and to whom should the appeal be made; and whether Her Majesty's Government will make further inquiries from the German Government on this case?

MR. BRODRICK: The case was tried before the Marine Court at Bremerhaven, and judgment was given on the 3rd May 1898, in favour of the “Falkenberg.” The master, who was also the registered owner of the “Jeannette,” declined to appeal from this decision on the ground of expense, and Her Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin, who was consulted, stated that in these circumstances it would be useless to make any representations to the German Government on the subject, as he was confident that the reply would be that the master might have appealed, but that, having failed to do so, the German Government could not interfere administratively in a matter which had formed the subject of a judicial decision.

BROOK STREET BOARD SCHOOL, CARLISLE.

MR. ALLISON (Cumberland, Eskdale): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the action of the Carlisle School Board in closing the Brook Street Board School and refusing to admit to the same the son of Mr. John T. Hill and

the sons of several other ratepayers residing in the vicinity, to their great inconvenience; whether such action is sanctioned by the Education Department; and whether he can take any steps to amend the grievance?

SIR J. GORST: The Brook Street Board School has not been closed; but the number of children for whom accommodation can be provided has had to be reduced, because an unsatisfactory classroom is to be closed in October next. It is on that account that applications for admission have been refused. The Education Department is informed that accommodation can readily be obtained elsewhere.

TREATMENT OF FEEBLE-MINDED CHILDREN.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether Her Majesty's Government intend to bring in a Bill to deal with the recommendations respecting feeble-minded and defective children contained in the Report of the Departmental Committee who reported in January of last year; and, if so, when the Bill will be introduced, and in which House?

SIR J. GORST: The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative; the particulars asked for in the latter part are still under consideration.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT, 1876.

MR. J. ELLIS (Notts., Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Annual Report and Returns respecting the administration of the Cruelty to Animals Act, 1876, for the year 1898 will be laid upon the Table and distributed?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: The Report and Returns referred to are now in the hands of the printer; and when they are completed, I will lose no time in laying them upon the Table.

THE "TOURMALINE" AFFAIR.

MR. HEDDERWICK: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to a statement sworn to by Major Spilsbury in the course of his trial at Gibraltar, to the effect that the same Foreign Office warning that was conveyed to him with respect to the expedition of the "Tourmaline" was also conveyed to the directors of the Globe Venture Syndicate; and whether there is any foundation for this statement; and, if so, whether the Government propose to proceed criminally against the directors of the syndicate named?

MR. BRODRICK: The directors of the Globe Venture Syndicate were warned against the "Tourmaline" expedition, but it is not the intention of Her Majesty's Government to take criminal proceedings against them.

MR. HEDDERWICK: Is it not the case that the men who have been prosecuted by the Government were merely servants carrying out the orders of the directors of the company?

[No reply.]

MR. HEDDERWICK: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the recent acquittal of Major Spilsbury, after a full trial by jury before the Chief Justice of Gibraltar, the Government will reconsider their decision to abstain from demanding compensation from the Moorish Government on behalf of Mr. Henry Grey and his fellow prisoners for the cruelties to which they were subjected in captivity?

MR. BRODRICK: As at present advised, Her Majesty's Government see no grounds for reconsidering their decision in the matter.

VACCINATION EXEMPTION CERTIFICATES.

CAPTAIN CHALONER (Wilts, Westbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the cost of obtaining exemption under the Vac-

cination Act of 1898, both by fees charged and by the demand for the production of birth certificates, which is so high that it makes it almost impossible for a working man to obtain an exemption; and whether he will take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that conscientious objectors shall not be prevented from obtaining the exemptions to which they are entitled under the Act, and free of charge?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: The honourable Member for the Loughborough Division of Leicestershire asked me an almost identical question on the 9th February last, and I would refer my honourable and gallant Friend to my answer—a copy of which I have sent him—only adding that I have no power to require these certificates of exemption to be given free of charge.

HARBOURS IN THE ISLE OF LEWIS.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if the Secretary for Scotland will consider the advisability of instructing the consulting engineer for the Congested Districts Board to report as to the best site for a harbour in Broad Bay, Isle of Lewis, and the cost of construction?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: The Western Highlands and Islands Commission of 1890, one of the members of which was Sir J. Wolfe Barry, a distinguished engineer, reported that the most suitable site for a harbour in Broad Bay was at Portnaguiran, and that the cost of such a harbour would be about £30,000, a sum greatly in excess of anything the Congested Districts Board can ever give. The Secretary for Scotland therefore cannot undertake to make such a demand on the time of a fully-employed officer as to call on Colonel Gore-Booth to prepare plans and estimates for so extensive a work, in view of the unlikelihood of its being carried out. Within the last few years a pier has been built on the other side of Broad Bay, just about six miles from Portnaguiran, at a cost of £1,900, of which Government gave £1,625.

SCOTTISH FISHERY BOARD.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he can state when the Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland will be laid upon the Table of the House?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: I am informed by the Fishery Board that Part I. containing their General Annual Report for the year 1898, will be presented to Parliament to-day.

THE MUSCAT INCIDENT.

SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the discussion of the Muscat incident has now closed, and when the Papers will be laid before Parliament?

MR. BRODRICK: Some local details are not yet definitely settled, and I fear no date can at present be fixed for presentation of Papers.

THE PLASTERERS' STRIKE.

MR. STEADMAN (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether the British Consuls at Florence and Milan did, in conjunction with the mayors of those places, sign or countersign the contracts of the foreign plasterers imported into England during the present dispute in the plastering trade, and, if so, whether they were acting within their right as representatives of the British Government?

MR. BRODRICK: No information on this subject has reached this Department, but Her Majesty's Consuls have been requested to report what took place.

THE MARGARINE TRADE IN DUBLIN.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, is any daily or weekly account kept of the quantity of margarine delivered in

Dublin; are the names of the consignees recorded; and whether it is entered in the Dublin Custom House list as margarine, or under some other name?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I will answer this Question. No daily or weekly account is kept of the quantity of margarine delivered in Dublin, nor are the names of consignees of this article recorded. Margarine imported into Dublin from abroad is entered as such in the daily bill of entry list, but, when received coastwise, is entered in that list under the general term of "merchandise." The only coastwise goods which are entered under their separate denominations are dutiable goods and those as to which any particular person or firm may have applied to have their consignments so treated.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): Is any record kept of the countries from which the margarine comes?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I understand it is usual, but I will inquire.

ROSS-SHIRE CROFTERS' GRIEVANCES.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Secretary for Scotland is aware that since Colonel Sitwell purchased the estate of Strathkyle, Culrain, Ross-shire, in July 1894, the tenants on the estate have been constantly subjected to ejectment proceedings, four only out of 15 crofters on the estate being left undisturbed. Is he aware that William Macleod, one of these tenants, who received notice to quit in 1896, appealed to the Crofters' Commission, who heard the case at Ardgay on the 4th May 1897, sustained the competency of the application, and fixed a rent for the holding; that, notwithstanding this decision, Colonel Sitwell appealed to the Court of Session, and that Lord Kincairney, in giving judgment on the case on the 14th July 1898, quoted the finality clause of the Crofters' Act, 1886, and held that there was no escape from the conclusion that the decision of the Crofters' Commission was final, and dismissed the action with

costs; and that Colonel Sitwell has now appealed to the second Court of Session; and, in view of the fact that repeated actions of this character seriously cripple crofters in the exercise of their calling and cause great expense to them, will the Secretary for Scotland consider the expediency of taking such steps as will admit of appeals from decisions of the Crofters' Commission being defended by the Government?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: The Secretary for Scotland has no information which enables him to make any statement in regard to the matters referred to in the first and second paragraphs of the honourable Member's Question, and in reply to the third paragraph he does not intend to take any action of the kind suggested.

BRITISH SUGAR TRADE AND THE NEW INDIAN DUTIES.

MR. MACLEAN (Cardiff): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can explain why in the Trade Returns it is the practice to classify confectionery and jams under the head of pickles; and whether he will change a practice which misleads all persons except experts as to the real extent and value of the sweetmeat trade?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: It is true that confectionery and preserved fruits are enumerated along with pickles and condiments in a joint heading in the trade accounts, but it is not possible to show separately the exports of every article without an amount of labour and cost which could not be justified. It is, therefore, the practice to group together articles of secondary importance as regards aggregate value, the composite headings relating so far as possible to the articles dealt in by a single trade. This practice has been followed in the present case, but in view of the interest taken in the exports of articles containing sugar, the question of the classification of these exports will be referred to the Committee for the Revision of the Trade Accounts which meets in the autumn.

SIR H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): Cannot the House, for the purpose of the forthcoming discussion, have a Return of the amount of confectionery and refined sugar exported from this country to India during last year?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I should think it possible we might be able to get that out; it would be of great interest.

SIR H. FOWLER: Certainly.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I will endeavour to see if it can be done.

AUTUMN MILITARY MANŒUVRES.

MR. HOZIER (Lanark, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether there are to be any Line regiments on Salisbury Plain during the month of July this year; and, if not, what is the object in the country being put to the expense of moving a Militia brigade from the North Eastern District to Salisbury Plain for training by itself during the month of July?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. J. POWELL WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): During July, as at present arranged, there will be on Salisbury Plain eight battalions of Regular troops, including a battalion of Royal Marine Light Infantry, and eight battalions of Militia. The Regulars and Militia will be formed into two divisions with Artillery and Cavalry.

SHEEP SCAB REGULATIONS.

SIR J. RANKIN (Hereford): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, having regard to the unsatisfactory results of the present method of dealing with the disease of sheep scab, he will consider the advisability of adopting a system of obligatory dipping of sheep at certain seasons of the year?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. W. H. LONG, Liverpool, West Derby): Local authorities are already empowered to require sheep affected with or suspected of sheep scab to be treated with some suitable dressing or dipping, or other remedy for the disease, and I do not think it would be practicable to go beyond this and to make it compulsory upon every owner of sheep, whether the sheep be affected with or suspected of disease or not, to apply such a dressing or dipping at certain stated intervals throughout the year, however useful or desirable such treatment may be, and in any case legislation would be necessary for the purpose.

PACIFIC CABLE.

MR. LOWLES (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of the categorical declaration concerning the Pacific Cable made by the Canadian Government, and the equally favourable declarations made by the Australasian Colonies, he can now state the intentions of the Imperial Government with regard to this project?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I am not yet in a position to make a statement upon the matter.

GIBRALTAR.

MR. F. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the attention of the Colonial Office has been directed to the urgent necessity for remedying the condition of affairs which has arisen in the Fortress of Gibraltar through overcrowding, the insufficiency of the police force, and the insanitary state of the Government buildings; whether he can hold out any hope of being able to remove the evils of which complaint is made; and whether he will communicate to the House the Report of the Government Committee which col-

lected evidence in Gibraltar last year with reference to the health and comfort of the inhabitants?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: The questions referred to are engaging my attention and that of the Secretary of State for War, and I hope that it may be found possible to take some action in regard to them. The Report of the Committee to which the honourable Member refers is a Confidential Report to the Secretary of State for War, and it is not intended to publish it.

MR. RHODES' RAILWAYS.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to a fully reported speech delivered by Mr. Cecil Rhodes in South Africa, on the 17th of August last, in which he said that he wished to earn dividends on the Mafeking-Bulawayo line, so as to get a guarantee from Her Majesty to go on to Tanganyika, and whether this line forms any part of the security which Mr. Rhodes proposes for the Imperial guarantee which he is trying to persuade Her Majesty's Government to grant; whether the Government, before pledging the Imperial credit, will have an independent investigation made to ascertain whether the dividend has been actually earned and is likely to be maintained; and whether, in view of the facts that assertions have been freely made that the line was badly built, and that part of it was actually washed away shortly after its construction, the Government will also have a careful survey of the railway made by competent engineers, totally unconnected with Mr. Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company, before coming to any final decision?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): The earnings of the Mafeking-Bulawayo line form part of the security proposed. The Government, before pledging Imperial credit, would, of course, satisfy themselves on the points mentioned in the second and third para-

graphs, and as the line is worked by the Cape Government, they could provide evidence of receipts and expenses. Portions of the line were very rapidly built to meet the exigencies of the Matabele rebellion; but the defects had to be made good before the Government engineer would grant his certificate for the line as far as Palapye, to which the contract of 1894 applied. The line from Palapye to Bulawayo would require independent inspection.

KILMALCOLM PARISH ASSESSMENTS.

SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the fact that in consequence of the action of the Parish Council of Kilmalcolm Parish in assessing the orphan homes of Scotland for poor and school rates, Mr. Quarrian has called upon the school board of the district to take over the education of the 1,000 children of school age hitherto gratuitously educated by him; whether the school board has refused to take over the education of the children in question; and whether the Scottish Education Department purpose taking any steps to compel them to do so?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: Mr. Quarrian has forwarded to the Scotch Education Department a copy of the correspondence between himself and the school board, in which the board decline to hold themselves responsible for providing education for the children in question. The Department cannot enter upon the question unless it is proved that there is a deficiency in the school provision of the district, based upon information that children for whom the school board is bound to make provision have been refused admission to the public school.

TUNG-CHANG-FU RAILWAY COMMUNICATION.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Lieutenant Watts-Jones has discovered a good railway route to Tung-Chang-Fu via Mongkyeng to

Tinchau, which can be reached by Kunlon Ferry without difficulty; and whether this discovery will enable the railway to be made from Burmah to Yun-nan?

MR. BRODRICK: The Reports of the officers engaged on the Survey are addressed to the Yun-nan Company, in whose services they are at present, and Her Majesty's Government have no particulars. It is, however, understood that what is considered a practicable route into Yun-nan has been found.

IRISH TITHE RENT-CHARGE BILL.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can now state when he will introduce the Irish Tithe Rent-Charge Bill?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am unable to assign a date for the introduction of this Bill, but I should hope it might be introduced before Whitsuntide.

MR. DILLON: Will the right honourable Gentleman undertake to give us reasonable notice?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: If the Bill be introduced before Whitsuntide it will have to be under the Ten Minutes Rule.

IRISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL'S SPEECHES.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the language used by Mr. Bagwell at the annual dinner of the land agents of Ireland on Thursday last, when he is reported to have said "he had been called in to administer an Act of Parliament which of all Acts of Parliament ever drawn was the worst; the Land Act of 1896 was pretty bad, but the Act of 1898 would puzzle anybody, etc.; so long as the people who asked for impossibilities got half impossibilities they would never be satisfied"; and whether, if such language was used by Mr. Bagwell, he will be continued in his

office as a member of the Local Government Board?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am informed by Mr. Bagwell that the report of his speech, which was obviously much condensed, gives a totally wrong impression of what he said, and that his observations in reference to the Local Government Act applied only to the manner in which it was drafted, and not to the policy of it, which he has always strongly supported. The subsequent remarks were mere generalities, and had no reference to the Local Government Act or to its administration by the Local Government Board. Under the circumstances, I do not consider that anything has occurred which would justify the strong step suggested in the second paragraph.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN IRELAND.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department will he explain why, in Ireland, the factory inspectors refuse to recognise the Roman Catholic holidays, and, by so doing, compel some mills managed by Roman Catholics to give a number of holidays far in excess of statutory requirements?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: The Factory Acts require holidays to be given on Christmas Day and St. Patrick's Day, and either on Good Friday or Easter Monday. The choice of the other holidays required to make up the prescribed total for the year lies entirely with the factory owners. The Roman Catholic holidays may be, and usually are, chosen by them, and are recognised by the inspectors. The holidays fixed by statute must be given; but I feel certain that no inspector insists on holidays "far in excess of the statutory requirements."

THE OFFICIAL DEBATES.

MR. T. B. CURRAN (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is in a position to make some re-arrangement of the filling up of the Pink Paper; whether any agreement has been made with the contractor of the "Parliamentary Debates"

for a continuous supply of the daily parts to honourable Members who sign one Pink Paper for the whole of the Session; and if he will make such arrangements with the contractor as shall secure to honourable Members the delivery of back numbers and indexes?

MR. STEADMAN: I beg at the same time to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he has seen his way to do something to relieve Members from the necessity of signing the Pink Paper every day in order to obtain a complete record of the proceedings of Parliament by means of the "Parliamentary Debates"?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. A. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's) (for MR. HANBURY): In accordance with the understanding arrived at when the matter was discussed on the Vote on Account, it has been arranged that the number of volumes in an ordinary Session will not exceed eight, as was the rule until last Session; and all future numbers of the "Debates" will be issued to Members on giving a general order instead of signing the Pink Paper daily.

ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he has yet made inquiry why men of Bernera Island of Lewis, have for some years past been refused admission to the Royal Naval Reserve at Stornoway; and will he give instructions for any restrictions against men from this district to be withdrawn?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: It is necessary to limit the number of Reserve men entered at Stornoway, so as not to be disproportionate to the total number raised in the United Kingdom; and as the number allotted to this district can be recruited from those living within an easy distance of the port, it is not considered desirable to pass over such candidates in order to enter men living in the remote parts of the islands, whence it would be difficult to draw them quickly in the event of mobilisation.

MARRIAGE ACT, 1898.

MR. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that in some cases the authorised person before whom the declarations prescribed by section 6 of the Marriage Act, 1898, are to be made has been appointed by the members of churches at church meetings or by the deacons of churches; whether such appointment is a sufficient compliance with the provisions of the Act; whether, in addition to such appointment, it is necessary that the trustees or governing body of the registered building in which the marriage is to take place, or of some registered building in the same registration district, should authorise the person in whose presence the marriage is to be solemnised and certify him as having been duly authorised for the purpose; and whether a marriage solemnised in the presence of a person who has not been so authorised and certified would be valid?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): The person must be certified as being duly authorised by the trustees or other governing body of the building. The Act does not require any particular mode of previous selection. A marriage solemnised in the presence of a person not authorised and certified would not, in my opinion, be valid; but no general answer can be given to such a Question, as the circumstances of each particular case would have to be considered.

EDUCATION ESTIMATES.

MR. MCKENNA: What Estimates will be taken on Friday?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I propose to take the Education Estimates on Friday, subject to any change which may occur in the next two days.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL AND FINANCE BILL).

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That after this day, the several stages of the London Government Bill and the Finance Bill have precedence of all Orders of the Day and Notices of Motions on every day for which the Bills or either of them are appointed.”—(*The First Lord of the Treasury.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): In making this Motion for a large portion of the time of the House, I think I may appeal to the judgment of every man acquainted with Parliamentary procedure to support the Government in the course which we propose. Everyone who has any Parliamentary experience knows that the principal Bill of the Session and the Budget are both Bills which ought to be proceeded with energetically if the House is to return a good account of its labours at the end of the Session. It is now the 24th of April, and not many weeks divide the House from the Whitsuntide holidays, and I think it is not unreasonable to ask the House to allow us to devote the greater part of the time that is left to the discussion of the two Bills which I have mentioned. Of course, in previous years when the Budget has been an uncontroversial Measure, such a course as I now propose has not been necessary; but honourable Gentlemen have taken care to convince the Government that such is not the case this year; and, that being so, they will be the last persons to object to the Government finding the necessary time to discuss a matter which, if left to us, we could pass with great rapidity and without trespassing on the time of private Members. With regard to the London Government Bill, I am told that there are already 40 pages of Amendments down; and I am far from supposing that the ingenuity of honourable Members has been exhausted, and that other Amendments will not be put down in the course of the discussion. Therefore, I ask the House to set to work on these two Bills and make progress with them before the Whitsuntide holidays are reached. With regard to the question put

to me just now with regard to Wednesdays, I do not propose to take the next three Wednesdays, and I hope it may be possible to avoid taking the fourth and remaining Wednesday before the Whitsuntide holidays; but I make no pledge on that subject, although I hope to except that also, unless I am disappointed with the progress made with the Budget Bill and the London Government Bill. The Machinery Bill, which the honourable Gentleman has so much at heart, has already been the subject of a discussion in this House, and no new arguments can be deduced on that subject, and as everybody knows that no further discussion can take place, I trust this Motion, therefore, will be carried without a long Debate.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): The demands made by the right honourable Gentleman on the time of private Members are only in keeping with previous demands this Session. I have not provided myself, as has been sometimes the practice in previous Sessions, with information in order to discover whether the 24th April contains any magic virtue in itself, and I think it is generally better to deal with the business of each year on its merits. In this case there are two Bills before us in regard to which the Government propose to go beyond their own time. The first is the London Government Bill, of the Amendments to which the right honourable Gentleman takes a view which, I think, they hardly deserve. I do not think the number of Amendments put down on the Paper is in any degree excessive.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I do not say that they are necessarily excessive.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Everyone knows the Bill entirely turns on details. We discussed it, and discussed the details on the Second Reading, and from that the House can judge that many of them are of the greatest importance. I can assure the right honourable Gentleman that I have not observed amongst the most ardent critics of the Measure any desire to prolong unduly discussion on its details. The right honourable Gentleman also grouped with this Bill another Bill, namely, the Budget Bill.

I do not exactly see in the same clear light the necessity for extreme urgency of that Bill. Its importance, of course, could not be denied, but I am not able to see why it should be pushed forward by this unusual method. That is a thing I cannot now appreciate. The right honourable Gentleman, however, has considerably relieved the situation by his undertaking with regard to Wednesdays. The Motion and certain comments in the public Press led us to fear that the right honourable Gentleman intended to deal harshly with Wednesdays. It is always an unfair proceeding, and the one thing I especially dislike is that the Government should be led to picking and choosing in this matter. And when I saw there was an Amendment by one of my honourable Friends with regard to a particular Wednesday the very fact made me realise more clearly the danger involved if we did not obtain an explicit understanding on that matter. The right honourable Gentleman now says he is certainly not going to take the three Wednesdays that come first, and that after that he will not take Wednesdays at all unless he was compelled.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Up to Whitsuntide. After Whitsuntide there are always two Wednesdays left for the discussion of Bills. I was not dealing with the period after Whitsuntide.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: With that explicit understanding I do not think the House can have much to fear as to any partiality in the application of this Motion if it is carried. In these circumstances I do not see that we can offer any resistance to the Motion.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Isle of Thanet) said the right honourable Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition held that no good object could be served by inquiring whether the 24th of April was a date which had any particular magic in it, but the right honourable Gentleman was apt to forget that the 24th of April is apt to become on occasions of this sort the 24th of March. He (Mr. Lowther) thought the House had a right to complain that the order of business was not settled fairly on definite lines, and that arrangements when come to by the House were not adhered to. It

might or it might not be right for the Government to take the whole time of the House after the introduction of the Budget, but it ought to be settled and ought to be put in its proper place in the Standing Order of the House, and not taken by such a means as the Motion which had been moved. One of the first effects of this Motion would be to remove from the consideration of the House some questions of very great importance which were set down for tomorrow, the importance of one of which his right honourable Friend had himself admitted, namely, the question of Notices of Motion placed on the Order Book to prevent the discussion of matters of urgency under Standing Order 17. That was, of course, the sacred Order of all the orders of the House. His right honourable Friend asked the private Members to part with their privileges for the main part of the Session, and he had told them that no injury would be done, because where matters were of sufficient urgency and importance as to merit the immediate and special attention of the House, they could always be raised under Standing Order 17. He pointed out that that Order was the means whereby matters of real urgency could be discussed by the House of Commons, but he appeared to have forgotten that an honourable Member had only to put down a Motion—he had done it himself—to practically remove a Standing Order altogether. He always intended to put down a Motion when matters of urgency came forward, and his right honourable Friend could take it that no questions of urgency could be raised until this unsatisfactory position had been dealt with. Standing Order 17 being a mere mockery, honourable Members were placed in a position that they were asked now to give up every opportunity for the rest of the Session of raising any question, however urgent and important it might be from a national point of view. He thought it desirable that the House should enter a protest against this alteration of the proceedings. A proper Order ought to be carefully prepared and rigorously adhered to. He, for one, strongly objected to the proposal that had been made.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) desired to say a few words with regard to the proposal before the House from the point of view

of the Irish representatives. He could not, for his part, see anything in the London Government Bill which should have necessitated the sacrifice of the time of the private Members. He desired, however, to protest strongly against the manner in which the Government dealt with Irish business. He thought the old practice of the House should be strictly adhered to, and that the practice of restricting Members to what might be termed the Ten Minutes Rule in important Measures should be abandoned. There was a Bill which the Secretary for Ireland proposed to bring in under that Ten Minutes Rule—the Irish Tithe Rent Charges Bill. That was a very important Measure, and he thought it was an abuse of the practice of the House to bring it in in such a way. If the Government required to take the time of the private Members, they ought, first of all, to use their own time in a proper manner.

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question, to add the words 'except on Wednesday the 17th May.'—
(*Mr. Strachey.*)

MR. STRACHEY (Somerset, N.) could see no reason why the Government should pick and choose which Wednesday it might be necessary for them to take. The House had been told by the right honourable Gentleman that it would be only the Wednesday before Whitsuntide that was in jeopardy. That was the day upon which the Rating of Machinery Bill would come up for discussion. It was a Measure which many Members on both sides of the House regarded as of very vital importance, and certainly of equal or greater importance than the Ecclesiastical Assessments (Scotland Bill) and the Scotland Liquor Traffic Bill, and he thought it very hard that they would not be able to discuss it. He therefore begged to move his Amendment.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I hope the honourable Member will not press his Amendment. I have already explained to the House the reason why we cannot give any pledge with regard to any of those Bills which come on on a Wednesday. The Machinery Rating Bill has been unfortunate enough to be put down on the last Wednesday before Whitsuntide, and consequently is in danger. The last thing that I wish to do is to minimise the importance of the Bill. But in any case all we can do is to have a discussion on it, because everybody knows that, however important it may be, it cannot be passed this Session.

Question proposed—

"That those words be there added."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"To leave out the words 'Wednesday the 17th May,' and add the word 'Wednesdays.'—
(*Mr. Bryn Roberts.*)

*MR. BRYN ROBERTS was of opinion that it was monstrous that Wednesday should be taken by the Government at this early period of the Session. The Motion, if granted, would deprive private Members of all Wednesdays after Whitsuntide, and a Wednesday was the only day upon which private Members could make any progress whatever. He thought the action of the Government was strong when they took Tuesday so early in the Session, but to take Wednesdays was absolutely monstrous.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil) seconded the Amendment.

Question put—

"That the words 'Wednesday the 17th May' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

The House divided:—Ayes 60; Noes 273.—(Division List No. 91.)

AYES.

Baldwin, Alfred
Banbury, Frederick George
Barlow, John Emmott
Bathurst, Hn. Allen Benjamin
Beckett, Ernest William
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Billson, Alfred
Bond, Edward

Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
Bowles, Capt. H. F. (Middlesex)
Burns, John
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athol
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Davitt, Michael
Dillon, John

Donelan, Captain A.
Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
Folkestone, Viscount
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.).
Galloway, William Johnson
Gordon, Hon. John Edward
Gunter, Colonel
Harty, Laurence

Hobhouse, Henry
 Holland, Wm. H. (York, W. R.)
 Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
 Hozier, Hn. James Henry Cecil
 Kitson, Sir James
 Knowles, Lees
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks)
 Logan, John William
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lough, Thomas
 Lowther, Rt. Hn. James (Kent)
 Macaleese, Daniel
 McCalmont, Col. J. (Antrim, E.)
 McGhee, Richard

Marks, Harry H.
 Maxwell, Rt. Hn. Sir Herbt. E.
 Monk, Charles James
 Murray, Chas. J. (Coventry)
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford
 Pease, Sir Joseph W. (Durham)
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Power, Patrick Joseph
 Priestley, Sir W. O. (Edin.)
 Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Cheltenham)
 Scoble, Sir Richard Andrew
 Shaw, Chas. Edw. (Stafford)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)

Stevenson, Francis S.
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
 Tennant, Harold John
 Warde, Lieut.-Col. C. E. (Kent)
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Young, Samuel (Cavan, East)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Mr. Strachey and Mr.
 Cawley.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
 Allan, William (Gateshead)
 Allen, W. (Newc.-under-Lyme)
 Allison, Robert Andrew
 Allsopp, Hon. George
 Anstruther, H. T.
 Ascroft, Robert
 Asher, Alexander
 Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
 Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert H.
 Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
 Austin, Sir John (Yorksire)
 Austin, M. (Limerick, W.)
 Bagot, Capt. Joceline FitzRoy
 Bailey, James (Waltham)
 Baird, John George Alexander
 Baker, Sir John
 Balcarras, Lord
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r.)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. B. (Clackm.)
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell
 Barry, Rt. Hn. A. H. Smith (Hunts)
 Barry, Sir Fran. T. (Windsor)
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Brist.)
 Bemrose, Sir Henry Howe
 Beresford, Lord Charles
 Bethell, Commander
 Biddulph, Michael
 Bill, Charles
 Blundell, Colonel Henry
 Bolitho, Thomas Bedford
 Bowles, T. Gibson (King's Lynn)
 Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
 Brown, Alexander H.
 Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
 Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
 Burt, Thomas
 Buxton, Sydney Charles
 Caldwell, James
 Cameron, Sir Charles (Glasgow)
 Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
 Carlile, William Walter
 Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson-
 Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
 Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
 Cayzer, Sir Charles William
 Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, East)
 Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
 Chaloner, Capt. R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
 Chamberlain, J. Austen (Wor.)
 Channing, Francis Allston
 Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Charrington, Spencer

Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton)
 Chelsea, Viscount
 Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)
 Coddington, Sir William
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Colville, John
 Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Courtney, Rt. Hn. Leonard H.
 Cox, Irwin Edw. B. (Harrow)
 Cranbourne, Viscount
 Crombie, John William
 Cruddas, William Donaldson
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalbiac, Colonel Philip Hugh
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
 Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Dorington, Sir John Edward
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
 Drage, Geoffrey
 Duckworth, James
 Dunn, Sir William
 Elliot, Hn. A. Ralph Douglas
 Ellis, John Edward
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Farquharson, Dr. Robert
 Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
 Fenwick, Charles
 Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
 Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manch'r.)
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
 Firbank, Joseph Thomas
 Fisher, William Hayes
 Fison, Frederick William
 FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose-
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
 Fry, Lewis
 Garfit, William
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Gilliat, John Saunders
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Gould, Charles
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
 Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. George's)
 Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
 Goulding, Edward Alfred
 Gourley, Sir Edw. Temperley
 Graham, Henry Robert
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Gull, Sir Cameron

Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Hall, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Halsey, Thomas Frederick
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Harwood, George
 Heath, James
 Heaton, John Henniker
 Hoare, Edw. Brodie (Hampst'd.)
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Holland, Hn. Lionel R. (Bow)
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Howard, Joseph
 Hudson, George Bickersteth
 Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
 Hutton, John (Yorks. N. R.)
 Jacoby, James Alfred
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
 Johnson-Ferguson, Jabez Edw.
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Jones, David Brynmor (Swan.)
 Jones, William (Carnarvonsh.)
 Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.
 Kearley, Hudson E.
 Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
 Kimoer, Henry
 King, Sir Henry Seymour
 Kinloch, Sir John G. Smyth
 Labouchere, Henry
 Lafone, Alfred
 Lambert, George
 Langley, Batty
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lea, Sir Thomas (Londonderry)
 Lecky, Rt. Hn. William Ed. H.
 Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington)
 Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
 Leighton, Stanley
 Leng, Sir John
 Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
 Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Liverp'l.)
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowles, John
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Lyell, Sir Leonard
 McCartney, W. G. Ellison
 McArthur, William (Cornwall)
 McIver, Sir Lewis (Edin. W.)
 McKenna, Reginald
 McLeod, John
 Maddison, Fred
 Maden, John Henry
 Maple, Sir John Blundell

Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe
 Mearl, Colonel (Lancashire)
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Monckton, Edward Philip
 Morgan, Hn. F. (Monm'thsh.)
 Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarth'n.)
 Morton, Arthur H. A. (Deptfd.)
 Morton, Edw. J. C. (Devonport)
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. Graham (Bute)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Myers, William Henry
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Norton, Capt. Cecil William
 Nussey, Thomas Willans
 O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
 Oldroyd, Mark
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
 Palmer, George W. (Reading)
 Paulton, James Mellor
 Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
 Pender, Sir James
 Percy, Earl
 Philipps, John Wynford
 Pickersgill, Edward Hare
 Pilkington, Richard
 Pirie, Duncan V.
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Pretymann, Ernest George
 Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
 Purvis, Robert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Redmond, William (Clare)

Rentoul, James Alexander
 Richardson, J. (Durham)
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Ridley, Rt. Hn. Sir Matthew W.
 Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
 Robertson, Edmund (Dundee)
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thompson
 Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
 Round, James
 Royds, Clement Molyneux
 Rutherford, John
 Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
 Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
 Savory, Sir Joseph
 Seeley, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Sinclair, Capt. John (Forfarsh.)
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, James Parker (Lanarks.)
 Smith, Samuel (Flint)
 Soames, Arthur Wellesley
 Spencer, Ernest
 Spicer, Albert
 Stanley, Edw. Jas. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Henry M. (Lambeth)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Steadman, William Charles
 Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
 Stock, James Henry
 Stuart, James (Shoreditch)
 Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.)
 Thomas, Alf. (Glamorgan, E.)
 Thomas, David A. (Merthyr)

Thorburn, Walter
 Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray
 Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Tritton, Charles Ernest
 Valentia, Viscount
 Wallace, Robt. (Edinburgh)
 Wallace, Robert (Perth)
 Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. H.
 Walton, J. Lawson (Leeds, S.)
 Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
 Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (I. of Wight)
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Weir, James Galloway
 Wharton, Rt. Hn. John Lloyd
 Williams, Jos. Powell (Birm.)
 Williams, Jos. Powell (Birm.)
 Wills, Sir William Henry
 Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
 Wilson, John (Govan)
 Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
 Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks.)
 Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
 Woods, Samuel
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
 Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
 Yerburch, Robert Armstrong
 Young, Commander (Berks, E.)
 Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Bryn Roberts and Mr.
 Hedderwick.

Question put—

"That the words 'except on Wednesdays' be added to the Resolution."

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:

The position that the House is now in is that it has decided nothing, and that we should add these words to the Resolution so as to prevent the Government from taking Wednesday. In moving the Resolution, the right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury distinctly said that the Government did not intend to take Wednesdays until after Whitsuntide.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I said that it was possible, but not probable that we might have to take Wednesday the 17th of May.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:

The right honourable Gentleman said he hoped he would not require to take any Wednesday, but it was quite pos-

sible that under the exigencies of public business the Government might require or might be compelled to take one. Would the right honourable Gentleman say whether there is any prospect of taking that one, because if he says that they would not take any Wednesday till after Whitsuntide, the whole question in dispute would fall to the ground.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: We have a considerable amount of business before us on the two Bills—the London Government Bill and the Finance Bill—and I think we ought to make substantial progress before Whitsuntide without taking any Wednesday. But it is possible, and if there is any unforeseen delay—if the wheels of the machine move with unexpected slowness—that the Government may be driven to take the last Wednesday before Whitsuntide. I promised that the first three Wednesdays should be spared under any circumstances. I hope to spare them all, but it is just possible that we may have to take the last one.

Question put—

"That the words 'except on Wednesdays' be added to the Main Question."

The House divided:—Ayes 128; Noes 218.—(Division List No. 92.)

AYES.

Allan, William (Gateshead)
Allison, Robert Andrew
Asher, Alexander
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbert H.
Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
Baker, Sir John
Balfour, Rt. Hon. J. B. (Clackm.)
Barlow, John Emmott
Billson, Alfred
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, John
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Sir Charles (Glasgow)
Campbell-Bennerman, Sir H.
Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson-
Cawley, Frederick
Channing, Francis Allston
Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)
Colville, John
Courtney, Rt. Hon. Leonard H.
Crombie, John William
Davitt, Michael
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Dunn, Sir William
Ellis, John Edward
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Gladstone, Rt. Hon. Herbert J.
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gold, Charles.
Haldane, Richard Burdon
Harwood, George
Hobhouse, Henry
Holland, W. H. (York, W. R.)

Horniman, Frederick John
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Johnson-Ferguson, Jabez E.
Jones, David Brynmor (Swins'a)
Jones, William (Carnarvonsh.)
Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hon. Sir C.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kinloch, Sir John G. Smyth
Kitson, Sir James
Labouchere, Henry
Lambert, George
Langley, Batty
Lea, Sir Thomas (Londonderry)
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington)
Leng, Sir John
Leuty, Thomas Richmond
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Logan, John William
Lough, Thomas
Lyell, Sir Leonard
Macaleese, Daniel
McDonnell, Dr. M. A. (Queen's Co.)
McArthur, William (Cornwall)
McGhee, Richard
McLeod, John
Maddison, Fred.
Maden, John Henry
Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe
Marks, Harry H.
Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morton, E. J. C. (Devonport)
Moulton, John Fletcher
Norton, Captain Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
Oldroyd, Mark
Palmer, George W. (Reading)
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
Pease, Sir Joseph W. (Durham)

Philipps John Wyndford
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Reid, Sir Robert Threshie
Richardson, J. (Durham)
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Shaw, Charles E. (Stafford)
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
Sinclair, Capt. John (Forfarsh.)
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spicer, Albert
Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
Steadman, William Charles
Stevenson, Francis S.
Strachey, Edward
Stuart, James (Shoreditch)
Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David A. (Merthyr)
Trevelyan, Charles Phillips
Wallace, Robert (Edinburgh)
Wallace, Robert (Perth)
Walton, J. Lawson (Leeds, S.)
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wedderburn, Sir William
Weir, James Galloway
Williams, John Carvell (Notts)
Wills, Sir William Henry
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Govan)
Woods, Samuel
Young, Samuel (Cavan, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Mr. Bryn Roberts and
Mr. Hedderwick

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
Allsopp, Hon. George
Ascroft, Robert
Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. Joceline Fitz Roy
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Baird, John George Alexander
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Rt. Hon. G. W. (Leeds)
Banbury, Frederick George
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Barry, Rt. Hon. A. H. Smith (Hunts.)
Barry, Sir Francis T. (Windsor)
Barton, Dunbar Plunkett
Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benjamin
Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. H. (Bristol)

Beckett, Ernest William
Bemrose, Sir Henry Howe
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Beresford, Lord Charles
Bethell, Commander
Biddulph, Michael
Bill, Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bolitho, Thomas Bedford
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith.
Bowles, Capt. H. F. (Middlesex)
Bowles, T. Gibson (King's Lynn)
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Brown, Alexander H.
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Carlile, William Walter

Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
Cayzer, Sir Charles William
Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, East)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
Chaloner, Capt. R. G. W.
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (Birm.)
Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Charrington, Spencer
Chelsea, Viscount
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coddington, Sir William
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Colston, Chas. E. H. Athole
Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
Cox, Irwin Edward B. (Harrow)

Cranborne, Viscount
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton)
 Cruddas, John Donaldson
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalbaird, Colonel Philip Hugh
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
 Dorington, Sir John Edward
 Doughly, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
 Drage, Geoffrey
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert, V.
 Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
 Fergusson, Rt. Hon. Sir J. (Manx'r
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir Robert Baunatyne
 Firbank, Joseph Thomas
 Fisher, William Hayes
 Fison, Frederick William
 FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose-
 Flannery, Sir Fortescue
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Fry, Lewis
 Galloway, William Johnson
 Garfit, William
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Gilliat, John Saunders
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hon. John Edward
 Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon
 Goschen, Rt. Hon. J. (St. Geo's)
 Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
 Gouding, Edward Alfred
 Gourley, Sir Edw. Temperley
 Graham, Henry Robert
 Green, Walford D. (Wednesb'y)
 Greene, W. Raymond- (Cambs.)
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Gunter, Colonel
 Hall, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Halsey, Thomas Frederick
 Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord George
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hardy, Laurence
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Heath, James
 Heaton, John Henniker
 Hoare, Edw. B. (Hampstead)
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Holland, Hon. Lionel R. (Bow)
 Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry

Howard, Joseph
 Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
 Hudson, George Bickersteth
 Hutton, John (Yorks., N.R.)
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
 Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
 Kimber, Henry
 King, Sir Henry Seymour
 Knowles, Lees
 Lafone, Alfred
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks)
 Lecky, Rt. Hon. William E. H.
 Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
 Leighton, Stanley
 Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
 Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
 Long, Rt. Hon. W. (Liverpool)
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowles, John
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 McCalmont, Col. J. (Antrim, E.)
 McIver, Sir Lewis (Edin. W.)
 Maple, Sir John Blundell
 Martin, Richard Biddulph
 Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Monckton, Edward Philip
 Monk, Charles James
 Morgan, Hn. Fred (Monm'thsh.)
 Morton, A. H. A. (Deptford)
 Murray, Rt. Hon. A. Graham (Bute)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Myers, William Henry
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hon. Sir H. Stafford
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
 Pender, Sir James
 Percy, Earl
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Pinkerton, John
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Pretzman, Ernest George
 Priestley, Sir W. O. (Edin.)
 Purvis, Robert
 Pym, C. Guy

Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Richards, Henry Charles
 Ridley, Rt. Hon. Sir Mathew W.
 Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. Thomson
 Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
 Round, James
 Royds, Clement Molyneux
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Cheltenham)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyronce)
 Rutherford, John
 Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
 Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
 Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
 Savory, Sir Joseph
 Seeley, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, James Parker (Lanarks.)
 Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Spencer, Ernest
 Stanley, Edw. Jas. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Henry M. (Lambeth)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
 Stock, James Henry
 Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
 Talbot, Rt. Hon. J. G. (Oxf'd Un.)
 Thorburn, Walter
 Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray
 Tritten, Charles Ernest
 Valentia, Viscount
 Warde, Lieut.-Col. C. E. (Kent)
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (I. of Wight)
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Wharton, Rt. Hon. John Lloyd
 Williams, J. Powell- (Birm.)
 Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
 Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks.)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hon. E. R. (Bath)
 Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
 Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
 Yerburch, Robert Armstrong
 Young, Commander (Berks, E.)
 Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Sir William Walrand and
 Mr. Anstruther.

Main Question put—

"That after this day, the several stages of the London Government Bill and the Finance Bill have precedence of all Orders of the Day and Notices of Motions on every day for which the Bills or either of them are appointed."—(Mr. Balfour.)

The House divided:—Ayes 262; Noes 88.—(Division List No. 93.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
 Aird, John
 Allsopp, Hon. George
 Ascroft, Robert
 Asher, Alexander
 Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis

Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbert Hy.
 Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
 Bagot, Capt. Joceline FitzRoy
 Baird, John George Alexander
 Balcarras, Lord
 Baldwin, Alfred

Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manx'r)
 Balfour, Rt. Hon. Gerald W. (Leeds)
 Balfour, Rt. Hon. J. B. (Clackm.)
 Banbury, Frederick George
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell
 Barry, Rt. Hon. A. H. Smith (Hunts)

Barry, Sir Francis T. (Windsor)
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Barton, Dunbar Plunket
 Bathurst, Hn. Allen Benjamin
 Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
 Beckett, Ernest William
 Bemrose, Sir Henry Howe
 Beatnick, Lord Henry C.
 Beresford, Lord Charles
 Bethell, Commander
 Biddulph, Michael
 Bill, Charles
 Blundell, Colonel Henry
 Bolitho, Thomas Bedford
 Bond, Edward
 Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
 Bousfield, William Robert
 Bowles, Capt. H. F. (Middlesex)
 Bowles, T. Gibson (King's Lynn)
 Brassey, Albert
 Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
 Brown, Alexander H.
 Burdett-Coutts, W.
 Burt, Thomas
 Butcher, John George
 Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
 Carlile, William Walter
 Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson-
 Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
 Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
 Cayzer, Sir Charles William
 Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, East)
 Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
 Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
 Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r)
 Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Charrington, Spencer
 Chelsea, Viscount
 Cochrane, Hn. Thos. H. A. E.
 Coddington, Sir William
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
 Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Courtney, Rt. Hn. Leonard H.
 Cox, Irwin Edw. B. (Harrow)
 Cranborne, Viscount
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cross, H. Shepherd (Bolton)
 Cruddas, William Donaldson
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalbiac, Colonel Philip Hugh
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
 Dorington, Sir John Edward
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
 Drage, Geoffrey
 Duckworth, James
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
 Dunn, Sir William
 Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fellowes, Hn. Ailwyn Edward
 Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
 Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manc'r)
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
 Firbank, Joseph Thomas
 Fisher, William Hayes
 Fison, Frederick William
 FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose-
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Flannery, Sir Fortescue
 Fletcher, Sir Henry

Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
 Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
 Fry, Lewis
 Galloway, William Johnson
 Gaffit, William
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Gilliat, John Saunders
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hon. John Edward
 Gost, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
 Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. G'rge's)
 Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
 Goulding, Edward Alfred
 Gourley, Sir Edw. D. Temperley
 Graham, Henry Robert
 Green, Walford D. (Wendesbury)
 Greene, W. Raymond - (Cambs.)
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Gunter, Colonel
 Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Hall, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Halsey, Thomas Frederick
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord George
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hardy, Laurence
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Hazell, Walter
 Heath, James
 Heaton, John Henniker
 Hoare, Ed. Brodie (Hampst'd)
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Holland, Hon. Lionel R. (Bow)
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Howdsworth, Sir William H.
 Howard, Joseph
 Howell, William Tudor
 Hozier, Hn. James Henry Cecil
 Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
 Hudson, George Bickersteth
 Hutton, John (Yorks., N R.)
 Jenb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
 Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
 Johnson-Ferguson, Jabez Ed.
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.
 Kearley, Hudson F.
 Kimber, Henry
 King, Sir Henry Seymour
 Kitson, Sir James
 Knowles, Lees
 Lafone, Alfred
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
 Lea, Sir Thos. (Londonderry)
 Lecky, Rt. Hn. William Ed. H.
 Leese, Sir Jos. F. (Accrington)
 Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
 Leighton, Stanley
 Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
 Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
 Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (L'pool)
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowles, John
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Lucas Shadwell, William
 Lyell, Sir Leonard
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdonald, John Cumming
 McCalmont, Col. J. (Antrim, E.)
 M'Inver, Sir L. (Edinburgh, W.)

Maple, Sir John Blurdell
 Mappin, Sir Fredk. Therp
 Marks, Harry H.
 Martin, Richard Biddulph
 Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
 Middlemore, John Throgmorton
 Monckton, Edward Paulif
 Monk, Charles James
 Morgan, Hn. F. (Monm'thsh.)
 Morton, Ed. J. C. (Devonport)
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. Graham (Bute)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Myers, William Henry
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford
 Orr-Ewing, Chas. L.
 Palmer, George W. (Reading)
 Pender, Sir James
 Percy, Earl
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Pilkington, Richard
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Pretyman, Ernest George
 Priestley, Sir W. Overend (Edin.)
 Purvis, Robert
 Pym, C. Guy
 Rankin, Sir James
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Richards, Henry Charles
 Richardson, J. (Durham)
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Ridley, Rt. Hon. Sir M. W.
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
 Round, James
 Roys, Clement Molyneux
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Cheltenham)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyne)
 Rutherford, John
 Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
 Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
 Sassoon, Sir Albert Edward
 Savory, Sir Joseph
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, Jas. Parker (Lanarks.)
 Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Spencer, Ernest
 Stanley, Edw. Jas. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Henry M. (Lambeth)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stevenson, Francis E.
 Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
 Steck, James Henry
 Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Ofd Univ.)
 Tennant, Harold John
 Thorburn, Walter
 Tomlinson, Wn. Ed. Murray
 Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Tritton, Charles Ernest
 Usborne, Thomas
 Valentia, Viscount
 Verney, Hon. Richard Greville
 Warde, Lt.-Col. C. E. (Kent)
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of W.)

Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
Wharton, Rt. Hn. John Lloyd
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
Williams, Jos. Powell- (Birm.)
Wills, Sir William Henry
Wilson, J. W. (W'cestersh., N.)
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (Yorks.)

Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E.R. (Bath)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong
Young, Commander (Berks, E.)

Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Sir William Walrond and
Mr. Anstruther.

NOES

Allan, William (Gateshead)
Allison, Robert Andrew
Ambrose, Robert
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
Baker, Sir John
Barlow, John Emmott
Billson, Alfred
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, John
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Sir Chas. (Glasgow)
Cawley, Frederick
Channing, Francis Allston
Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)
Colville, John
Crombie, John William
Davitt, Michael
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Ellis, John Edward
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fenwick, Charles
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gold, Charles
Harwood, George
Hedderwick, Thomas Chas. H.
Hobhouse, Henry
Holland, W. H. (York, W.R.)

Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, David Brynmor (S'nsea)
Kinloch, Sir John Geo. Smyth
Lambert, George
Langley, Batty
Leuty, Thomas Richmond
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Logan, John William
Lough, Thomas
Macaleese, Daniel
MacDonnell, Dr. M. A. (Qn's Co.)
M'Ghee, Richard
M'Leod, John
Maddison, Fred.
Maden, John Henry
Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
Morley, Rt. Hn. John (Montrose)
Morton, Ed. J. (Devonport)
Moulton, John Fletcher
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
Oldroyd, Mark
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
Pease, Sir Jos. W. (Durham)
Philipps, John Wynford
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.

Power, Patrick Joseph
Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
Reid, Sir Robert Threshie
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Soames, Arthur Wellealey
Spicer, Albert
Strachey, Edward
Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
Thomas, Alf. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alf. (Merthyr)
Wallace, Robert (Edinburgh)
Wallace, Robert (Perth)
Walton, J. Lawson (Leeds, S.)
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wedderburn, Sir William
Weir, James Galloway
Williams, John Carvell (Notts)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Govan)
Woods, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Mr. Steadman and Mr.
James O'Connor.

Ordered, That, after this day, the several stages of the London Government Bill and the Finance Bill have precedence of all Orders of the Day and Notices of Motions on every day for which the Bills or either of them are appointed.

AGED DESERVING POOR.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That a Select Committee of Seventeen Members be appointed to consider and report upon the best means of improving the condition of the Aged Deserving Poor, and of providing for those of them who are helpless and infirm; and to inquire whether any of the Bills dealing with Old-Age Pensions, and submitted to Parliament during the present Session, can with advantage be adopted either with or without amendment.”—(Sir William Walrond.)

Mr. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.), on a point of order, asked, with regard to the second part of the Motion beginning with the words “and to inquire,” whether there was any precedent for it, and whether it was in order, in the case of certain Bills which had not yet passed their Second Reading in the House, to ask a Select Committee to inquire whether any of them “can with advantage be adopted either with or without amendment”?

*MR. SPEAKER: I really have not had any opportunity of considering this question—my attention having only been called to it since I entered the House—in order to see whether there is any precise precedent for the wording of the Motion. But there are precedents certainly for the referring to a Select Committee of Bills before the House which have not passed the Second Reading

ing stage, as documents for the purpose of inquiring into their merits. The honourable Members will see that, although the words included in the Motion as to whether the Bills can be adopted "with or without amendment" might convey the idea to anyone unpractised in Parliamentary procedure that the Committee were to proceed through the Bill clause by clause as if legislating on these Bills. No one who understands Parliamentary procedure would suppose that they could bear that meaning. The words simply amount to an Order of the House that the Committee, in dealing with this subject of old-age pensions, should take into consideration any proposals contained in the Bills which have been introduced just as they might consider any proposals embodied in a pamphlet or any other document. No report or recommendation of the Committee with regard to these Bills can have any effect whatever by way of advancing the Bills a stage in this House. It is not for me, therefore, to say that the Motion is out of order; it is a matter entirely for the House to say whether it adopts the suggestion.

MR. ASQUITH (Fife, E.): I presume, Sir, we are to infer from the silence of the right honourable Baronet that the grounds upon which this proposal is recommended by the Government to the House were exhaustively stated in the speech delivered about a month ago by my right honourable Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies. On that hypothesis, I think it is not out of place—indeed, I think it is incumbent upon us—to examine this proposal, not merely in the daylight of its abstract merits, but with some regard, at any rate, to the various steps and stages in the interesting historical process by which we have travelled to the point reached to-night. Sir, the question of making better provision for the aged and destitute and deserving poor is not a novel question. As the right honourable Gentleman aptly reminded us the other day, it is a question which has only comparatively recently entered into the polemical arena of Party controversy. Dr. Hunter, the late Member for Aberdeen, whose loss we have such frequent occasion to deplore, was, if not the first, at any rate one of the first to bring it to public prominence, and it is the

barest justice to acknowledge what no one, I am sure, in the House will be chary of admitting that there is no man in this country who did more than the Colonial Secretary himself both to awaken the conscience of the people to the scandals of our existing system and to urge upon their judgment the necessity of devising some appropriate form of remedy. Sir, the question was in that stage, and it had not passed beyond that stage, when, in the autumn of 1892, Mr. Gladstone's Government took office. They were impressed, as deeply impressed as any of their successors could have been, with the urgency of this problem. They were also as alive as I believe Her Majesty's Government are to-day to the dangers and even to the disasters which might follow from what I may call the precipitate and empirical handling of the question. They accordingly took a step which I venture to think, upon reflection, every impartial man will agree was wise and just—they appointed a representative and authoritative Commission, a Commission of which two members of the present Cabinet, the Colonial Secretary and the President of the Board of Trade, were members, and though the terms of reference to that Commission were in some respects wider than those which are suggested in the proposed Committee to-night, yet, in point of fact, it fell within the purview of their duty to make substantially the same inquiry in 1893 which you now propose to refer to the Committee in 1899. Sir, that Commission sat for two years. It took an enormous mass of valuable evidence, which demonstrated what, I think, can hardly be denied—namely, the existence of large and irreconcilable diversities of opinion, not only among the witnesses whom it examined, but among the members of the Commission itself, not indeed as to the magnitude of the evil, but as to the wisest and most efficacious form of remedying it. But, Sir, while this process of inquiry before the Commission was going on, the temptation which besets even the most virtuous and high-minded Opposition to manufacture a little Party capital against the Government of the day began to assert itself in certain quarters, and at last assumed irresistible force. On a Wednesday afternoon in the month

of April 1894, almost exactly five years ago, a Private Member's Bill, associated, I think, with the name of the honourable Member for Islington, dealing with this subject, came on for discussion, and the Government of the day, through Mr. Shaw Lefevre, who was then President of the Local Government Board, while expressing its strongest sympathy with the objects of the Bill, while cordially agreeing with its promoters that Parliament, as soon as it was properly informed and equipped, ought to take the subject in hand as a matter of practical legislation, pointed to the fact that this Commission was only midway in its inquiry, and, without asking the House to pronounce one way or the other on the merits, they moved and carried the adjournment of the Debate. Sir, I ask the House whether that was an unreasonable course. It certainly does not lie in the mouths of the right honourable Gentlemen opposite and their supporters to deny that it was reasonable, because a year and a half later, when they themselves came into power, their first step was to repeat the conduct of their predecessors and to refer this matter again to a Committee; and now to-night, five years after that Debate, they acknowledge, by the terms of this Motion, that they must have yet another Committee. No sooner had the Session come to an end than I find that my right honourable Friend the Colonial Secretary went down to Liverpool and made a very remarkable speech—on 6th September 1894. He denounced the Government, as he, of course, was entitled to do, for its Irish policy, and for a thousand faults, both of omission and commission; but, Sir, the sting of his attack became pointed and obvious when he went on to say that he would like to call the attention of his audience and the country “to the way in which this Government [Lord Rosebery's] deals with questions that concern the happiness of the people,” and he took, as his first illustration, the question of old-age pensions. He described the history of the Bill, the consideration of which had been adjourned at the suggestion of Mr. Shaw Lefevre, and he said—

“What did the Government do? Assisted by those who call themselves the representatives of labour in the House of Commons, they

summoned their forces, and, with the Irish at their back, they defeated the Second Reading of the Bill, which aimed at establishing the principle for which I am contending.”

Sir, that statement was as inaccurate in point of fact as it was unfair in point of argument. The Government did not oppose the Second Reading; they merely asked the House to adjourn the consideration of the question, identically the same thing that you are doing to-night. That speech of the right honourable Gentleman marked the beginning of the second stage in the history of this question—a stage when it was dragged, and deliberately dragged, for Party purposes into the arena of political controversy. I will not trouble the House with many quotations, though the material is copious, and I am indeed most sorry to have to make so many references to the Secretary of State for the Colonies; but, Sir, it is not my fault. From the first scene to the last the right honourable Gentleman has played the part of protagonist. He followed up that speech by another at Birmingham, and he invited the representatives of the various friendly societies of the Midland counties to meet him there to discuss this question upon a non-political occasion. Well, Sir, the discussion took place, and I have no doubt it was very valuable and interesting; but at the close the right honourable Gentleman wound it up with these remarkable words, which I think it is worth while to recall to the attention of the House. He said—

“I should myself imagine that a great scheme of this kind [a scheme for old-age pensions] should not be proposed to Parliament until some Chancellor of the Exchequer shall come who would have a surplus and not a deficit to deal with.”

We were then in a year of deficit, and my right honourable Friend the Member for West Monmouthshire (Sir W. Harcourt) had only a few months before forged that great fiscal instrument which has provided his successors with an abounding revenue, even for their large and lavish expenditure. But the right honourable Gentleman went on—

“You will recollect that we waited a long time for free education, but there comes a time when, under the administration of a Chancellor of the Exchequer whom I will not name, because I do not wish to revive political associations”—

The House, I am sure, will observe and admire the delicate dexterity with which it is possible to handle a non-political occasion—

“there was a very fruitful surplus, and that surplus was at once applied to give to the working classes the greatest boon which has been given to them during my political time.”

That was not a mere academical excursion into the paths of recent history. The object of the right honourable Gentleman was to let historians and the country infer from what had been done in the past what they were entitled to expect in the future. Then the right honourable Gentleman exercised a little prudent self-restraint, for he goes on to say—

“My hope is that, under another administration, and under another Chancellor of the Exchequer”—

This, again, to a non-political audience—

“whom also I will not name, we may return to a time of prosperity, to a period of surpluses, and my hope and belief is that these surpluses may be used in order to stimulate the provision of those old-age pensions, which would do more, I believe, than anything else to secure the happiness of the working classes.”

Well, Sir, to some extent, my right honourable Friend showed himself in that passage to have a correct prevision of the future. The Administration—the unfortunate Administration—on which he poured the phials of his contempt, left office, I think, within a year. The new Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom the right honourable Gentleman coyly declined to name to his non-political audience, was installed, and has sat for nearly four years at the Treasury. The time of prosperity, the period of surpluses, to which the right honourable Gentleman referred, has come, and, perhaps, gone. The sum of £12,000,000 sterling represents what in the course of three years has been the balance of your realised income over your realised expenditure. But what has become of the provision for Old-Age Pensions? I will not discuss the question. But, at any rate, not one halfpenny out of those £12,000,000 has been applied, or ever will be applied, to the purpose which the right honourable Gentleman suggests. Well, Sir, a month or two later, in February 1895, the Aberdare Com-

mission reported. Its members agreed upon very little, but there was one point on which they were agreed, and that was that it was necessary that further inquiry should be made upon the subject. Meanwhile the General Election drew near. The right honourable Gentleman the other day made—I forget where—a speech in which he challenged me to name one speaker of authority on the Unionist side who in the General Election of 1895 made promises of Old-Age Pensions. It was a challenge that it was not at all difficult to take up. I will not go over again the old familiar story about the election card of the First Lord of the Treasury.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Hear, hear.

MR. ASQUITH: The right honourable Gentleman has told us—and we all accepted the assurance, of course, with the most perfect confidence—that that card was issued without his knowledge or authority. It is unfortunate, but the card, whether issued with or without the right honourable Gentleman's authority, was, at any rate, a summarised epitome, drawn up by skilled agents, who presumably had attended meetings and had heard the right honourable Gentleman's speeches. These gentlemen drew up the card and circulated it by thousands to the electors of Manchester, either on the day before or on the day of the election, with this item of old-age pensions occupying either the first or second place on the programme.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Perhaps the right honourable Gentleman, who takes such an interest in this matter, will allow me to repeat that the card was issued not on the day of the election, but actually before I went down to my constituents. I was at that moment leading the House, and trying to bring the business of the Session to a conclusion. I did not go to Manchester as early as I desired. The card was issued before I went down to my constituents, and was not a summary of the speeches I made to them, for it was issued before any of those speeches were made. My speeches and my addresses to my constituents may be in the hands of the right honourable Gentleman, and there he will find the views I laid before my constituents, and not on the card.

Mr. Asquith.

MR. ASQUITH: Of course I accept the statement of the right honourable Gentleman, but I must say it was rather an odd method of electioneering. So far as I know, there never was any repudiation. The terms of the card were circulated broadcast in the streets of Manchester for a considerable period before the election; but I will turn to another no less authoritative statesman in the Government—I mean the Colonial Secretary. At the General Election the right honourable Gentleman went, among other places, to Hanley. On the 12th July 1895, he devoted part of his speech to this question, and I must really ask the House, for my accuracy in this matter has been directly challenged, to be good enough to listen to the textual quotation of what the right honourable Gentleman said—

“My proposal” [he said, after speaking of schemes for granting universal old-age pensions] “is more modest than that, and therefore it is more practical. I want to see, in the first place, a distinction made in the administration of the poor law between those who have good characters behind them and those who have been brought to poverty by their own fault.”

With that we all agree. The right honourable Gentleman went on—

“I want, in the second place, to assist friendly societies. I want to enable them to secure old-age pensions to their members, and at a cost well within their means. My proposal, broadly, is so simple that anyone can understand it.”

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): It was a proposal, not a promise.

MR. ASQUITH: I am deeply indebted to the right honourable Gentleman for that distinction. I think it will be sufficient to maintain an action for breach of promise. Well, this proposal—the House would like to know what it is—the proposal which was not a promise, and yet so simple that anybody can understand—

“I suggest” [said the right honourable Gentleman] “that whenever a man acquires for himself in a friendly society, or any other society, a pension of 2s. 6d. per week, the State should come in and double that pension.”

What need for further inquiry? Here is a statesman who had got his cut-and-dried proposal, and could produce it to the electors of Hanley, and through them

to the electors of the country, four or five years ago. For my part, I do not think that the electors who listened to that statement were guilty of fatuous or inexcusable credulity if, hearing this language from a responsible Minister of the Crown—for the new Government were then in power—they believed that one of the first acts of the Government, if they succeeded in obtaining a majority, would be to carry out this “modest and simple proposal, which any man in the street could so easily understand.” But, though modest, it was not yet ripe to be put into an Act of Parliament. We must have a Commission, which would sit for two years and then make an inconclusive report; after waiting the best part of another year, we shall come down to the House of Commons and ask the House to admit the impracticability of all the schemes proposed, and to institute a further inquiry before legislation is entered upon. Do you think that if the electors had been told that in 1895 they would have thought it consistent with the proposal or promise, whichever it was, which the right honourable Gentleman, in his responsible position, and speaking for himself and his colleagues, made to them at that time? I observe that my right honourable Friend the other day in his speech resorted to the familiar expedient of the *tu quoque*. He said that the Party most to blame was the Party who promised most, and if people were to be judged by their lavish promises the Liberal Party did more by holding out bribes to people than the Unionist Party did. Well, what is the evidence? He referred to the existence and the work of a body called the Imperial Old-Age Pensions League, which, it appears, proposed to grant universal pensions out of funds derived from the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England. It may be inexcusable ignorance on my part, but I confess that I never heard of the Imperial Old-Age Pensions League; but I can say for myself and my colleagues in the late Cabinet that we had no part in its formation, programme, or propaganda.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: One of your colleagues attended a meeting of the League.

MR. ASQUITH: I said of the late Cabinet. It is quite true that my

honourable Friend the Member for Ilkeston (Sir Walter Foster) was a member of the late Government, but he was the only member of it who had any connection of any sort or kind with that League. I do not want in any way to disparage that body, but when the right honourable Gentleman puts it forward as though it had been the official mouthpiece of the propaganda of the Liberal Party, I find, on investigation, that he himself, speaking at Birmingham on 11th October 1894, and referring in the most scoffing language to this same League, remarked that no prominent or responsible member of the Gladstonian Party had given it the slightest support. You really cannot have it both ways. Well, Sir, I do not profess to say exactly what weight these promises or proposals made by responsible Unionist statesmen had with the electors of 1895, but I am sure there is no impartially-minded man on either side of the House who went through that election who does not know that over large parts of the country, at any rate, vast bodies of people were influenced by the belief, well or ill founded, which proposals of this kind engendered in their minds, that this question of old-age pensions would not, when the new Parliament met, be again the subject of protracted and repeated inquiries, but would become a matter of prompt and practical legislation. If I were required to call witnesses, I could appeal to the memorial signed by more than a hundred honourable Gentlemen who sit behind the Treasury Bench. Old-age pensions having served its purpose as a Party watchword, is now to return again to neutralised territory which it ought never to have left. I rejoice in the change. We are as sensible, and always have been, of the urgency and gravity of this problem as any honourable Member who sits on the other side of the House, and we are as keen to find a practical solution. There are also many of us on this side of the House who are not satisfied that any one of the schemes yet put forward is either practicable or adequate. It would not be consistent with my conviction or my duty for me to vote against this proposal of the Government, but, at the same time, I conceive that we should have been grievously wanting in our duty if we had not made

this the occasion for recording an emphatic protest, not only in condemnation of the past, but as a warning for the future, against the procedure adopted in this case, by which the fortunes of a great social question have been subordinated to the petty exigencies of Party.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: I am loth to take part in this Debate so early, but the personal attack which has been made upon me by the right honourable Gentleman seems to make it necessary that I should make a few remarks in reply. I wondered throughout the whole of that speech what was the object with which it was made. The right honourable Gentleman recognises the extreme importance of the question which we have to discuss, but towards the solution of the question he made not the slightest practical suggestion from beginning to end of his speech. He told us that he deprecated wholly making this a Party question, and that he desired that it should be returned to neutralised territory. The whole object of the speech from beginning to end was to wrest the question from a neutralised position, and to make it a polemical and Party question. The right honourable Gentleman went back to a practice very common in the heat of the Home Rule controversy, and which I had almost hoped had died out. He based a long speech entirely upon extracts taken from speeches made by myself. Well, is it worth the right honourable Gentleman's while to try, by extracts which I will not call garbled, but which are necessarily incomplete and imperfect, and which give a most unfair view of the general argument which I have used in reference to this question—is it worth his while to waste half an hour of the time of this House in calling attention to what is, after all, a purely personal question, instead of leaving it to the House to discuss the important subject-matter before us? Now, what are the points which the right honourable Gentleman attempted to make. He goes back to the 6th September 1894, and he complains of the action then taken by the Party now sitting on this side of the House, and he attempts to show that it is inconsistent with the action we are taking to-day. But the action on both occa-

sions was identical. The action which we took then upon a Bill similar to that which was before the House a month ago, is precisely the action which we recommended the House to take in the case of the Bill of my honourable Friend the Member for Bow and Bromley. On that occasion it was perfectly well known that the Report of the Royal Commission to which the right honourable Gentleman referred, although not yet issued, would be entirely inconclusive; and what we urged the House to do then, and what the Government refused to do, was to accept the Second Reading of the Bill as an acceptance of the principle of the Bill without committing itself in any way to the details. And subsequently we asked that the Report of the majority of the Royal Commission should have the attention of the Government, and that they should appoint a further and expert Committee to consider the details. That is exactly what we did when we came into office, and it was exactly in accordance with the action of a month ago. The right honourable Gentleman quotes from a speech of mine addressed to a great meeting of representatives of friendly societies, but he wrests altogether the sense of that speech. What I said then was what was common sense even now, that an important element in the consideration of such a subject as this was the possession by the Chancellor of the Exchequer of a surplus. At that moment we had not a surplus, and I said very naturally if we had a surplus—I hoped some other Chancellor of the Exchequer would have a surplus—that I thought this question would then be materially advanced. Well, then, the right honourable Gentleman referred lastly to a speech of mine made at Hanley. I also desire to refer to that speech, because that is a speech in respect of which he is justified, if ever, in charging me with attempting to make Party capital out of this matter. That speech was made on the 12th July. 1895, in the very heat of the election, and at a time when a contest was going on in a district around. On that occasion, what I wished most earnestly to impress on my audience was that they should not have exaggerated notions as to what could be done in this matter. I rejected absolutely the extreme proposals that had been made by different

persons and pointed out the impossibility of bringing them to any fruitful result. I urged that all the difficulties of the matter should be taken into account, that we should proceed gradually and step by step, and, for myself, I offered a proposal, not a promise, for the consideration of the audience. The right honourable Gentleman made a very witty use of my interruption when I asked him to make a distinction between a proposal and a promise. Surely, there is a distinction between the two. A promise, even though made by myself personally, would impose the fulfilment of a distinct and definite pledge; but a proposal is merely a suggestion for discussion. For the life of me, I cannot understand why my honourable Friends opposite should be so much amused. Surely that is absolutely the fact. I am prepared to maintain that from first to last I have treated this question as a subject for discussion, and I have endeavoured to discuss it in all its different phases in scores of speeches, not as definite and dogmatic utterances on a difficult question, but as suggestions and proposals which I was anxious to have considered before anything in the nature of a definite legislation was introduced. Is it really contended by the right honourable Gentleman that no prominent politician on either side may discuss a question of this kind *coram populo* without being held to give a pledge which he must fulfil the first moment after assuming office? I think that would be an absolutely intolerable position. I have acted with perfect good faith in this matter. I took up the question at a time when I could have no possible Party object in dealing with it, inasmuch as my own Party were in office at the time, and it might be a cause of some embarrassment to them if I had pushed too far a proposition with which they were unprepared to deal. But I felt the matter was of so much importance that from that day, which was very early in the Eighties, down to the present day I have hardly ever made a public speech without referring to it and endeavouring, I hope, to throw some light upon it. In the course of the discussion of the matter—I do not know whether the right honourable Gentleman will think still worse of me on this account—in the course of that continued discussion, I have made

various proposals and suggested various schemes; and some of the proposals which I have made in the first instance I have myself subsequently rejected as being, as the right honourable Gentleman says, inadequate and impracticable. But I do not think I am to be condemned, or that my colleagues are to be held responsible, because in reference to a matter of this kind, which I have done something to popularise, I have called the attention of the country to the issues involved, and to make it easier to be dealt with sooner or later. Now, what is the good of all this recrimination in which the right honourable Gentleman has indulged? I have shown that, so far as I am concerned, at any rate, I did not endeavour at the time of the election to make Party capital out of the business. On the contrary, I was so modest in my proposals that I can well understand that others who are able, more or less conscientiously, to go further than I could, may have succeeded, to my disadvantage. But there is no doubt the subject was alluded to at the last General Election, but not by one Party alone. Has the right honourable Gentleman ever referred to the addresses of his own followers? If he has, he must have found in them passage after passage dealing with the subject on precisely the same lines as it was dealt with by those on this side of the House, except that inasmuch as we were then in office, and expected to remain in office, we were possibly a little more cautious than honourable and right honourable Gentlemen opposite, who had no fear of responsibility for a considerable time. Well, Sir, the proposition before the House is that another Committee should be appointed, and the right honourable Gentleman has concluded that he is unable to vote against it, although no one would have thought that throughout the greater length of his speech. But why won't he vote against it? Because he admits that up to the present time no scheme has been produced which, in his opinion, is both practicable and adequate. Well, I am inclined to agree with him, but I am not inclined on that account to say that no scheme will be found which, at all events, will be practicable. As to the adequacy, that is to some extent a matter of argument. As I pointed out when I last spoke on this question, I do not believe that it is in the power of any Party in

the House, as a whole, to propose any scheme which would be a final settlement of this question. I am perfectly convinced that we must be content to proceed step by step, because it is only in that way that we shall arrive at a satisfactory result and go further forward. Not only must we proceed step by step, but we must regard anything we do as to a large extent of an experimental character. We must be prepared to go back if we find we are on the wrong track, and to go forward if experience justifies what we are now doing. I am convinced that the Committee which is going to be appointed will enter on this inquiry with great advantage. The Royal Commission appointed by the right honourable Gentleman opposite, and the committee of experts appointed by this Government, have cleared the way to a great extent, and have shown the direction in which we may possibly proceed with great advantage. I do not think it is at all beyond reasonable hope that if this Committee is appointed at once—it has unfortunately been delayed by the opposition on the other side of the House—

MR. ASQUITH: How?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: Certainly, objection was taken.

MR. ASQUITH: We objected to its being taken without discussion.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: Precisely. That is what the right honourable Gentleman means, and in consequence of that the appointment of the Committee has been considerably delayed. If the appointment of the Committee had been allowed to be taken as a matter of course it would have got to work several weeks earlier than it is possible for it to do now. At all events, let us get it as quickly as we possibly can now, and I do not think then that it is unreasonable to hope that it will be able in the time still at its disposal to deal with the question and make a recommendation to the House on which the Government may base legislation. Let me remind the House and the country that the appointment of the Committee will not delay the dealing with this matter. The Government never pretended that they intended to deal with this matter the

moment they came into office, and no promise or pledge of the kind has been given by any Member of the Government, or by any Member of the Party who sit on these Benches. But it was said again and again, and I am prepared to say it now, that we do hope and intend to deal with this matter before we leave office. That is perfectly true, but as we cannot deal with it at the earliest until next Session of Parliament, the reference to a Committee will not delay the practical determination of the matter. Now, I really only rose in order to make some reply to the personal attack of the right honourable Gentleman, and I can only say in conclusion that I congratulate the House upon the practical progress that has been made. I express again my confident hope that before the Government goes out of office we shall have done something which, if not adequate in the opinion of the right honourable Gentleman, will, at all events, furnish a practical scheme the experience of which will be extremely useful in the future, and will lead to the ultimate solution of the question.

MR. LAMBERT (Devon, South Molton): I rise to move an Amendment to the Motion of the right honourable Member for Tiverton—

"To leave out all after 'that' and insert, 'having regard to the fact that a Royal Commission and a Special Committee have within the last four years reported upon the condition of, and the providing of pensions for, the aged poor, this House considers that further inquiry means unnecessary delay in the fulfilment of these promises of providing old-age pensions for the deserving poor which were made by Members of the Government at the last election.'"

The right honourable Gentleman has stated that this Committee would have been appointed several weeks ago had it not been for the opposition on this side of the House. Now, it is a notorious fact that the Motion for the appointment of the Committee was only put down on the Paper by the Government ten days ago. The right honourable Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies, with customary inaccuracy, accused the Opposition of delaying the matter for several weeks. That is on a level with what the right honourable Gentleman said on the Second Reading of the Bill

introduced by the honourable Member for Bow and Bromley, when he accused us of wasting time. On the contrary, it was the Leader of the House, the right honourable the First Lord of the Treasury, who had done his best to prevent progress on this matter by always putting down Government business in front of it. It was only when the Liberals came into office that the right honourable Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies blossomed out as a very strong and strenuous advocate for old-age pensions. The right honourable Gentleman suffers from unaccountable attacks of modesty, for before the last General Election he went up and down the country advocating old-age pensions, and attempting to make Party capital out of the subject. But since the General Election he has been so much occupied in the Colonial Office that he has not had time to answer even correspondence on the subject. It is all very well for the right honourable Gentleman to deny now that he ever attempted to make Party capital out of the question of old-age pensions. He did make Party capital out of it, and that to a very considerable degree. He told his audience, in a speech at Hanley, that he had made a proposal before the Aged Poor Commission in which he introduced a scheme of his own.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: No, Sir, I did not. It was introduced in a full explanation that it was a Parliamentary Committee scheme.

MR. LAMBERT: I will quote from the Minutes of Evidence of the Royal Commission. On the 4th July 1893, Question 12,981, the Chairman asked the right honourable Gentleman, "Is it in consequence of this that you have prepared a scheme," and the right honourable Gentleman answered, "Yes."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: One knows how questions are asked and answered on a Commission of that kind. One answers in a sense which is not always technically accurate. If the honourable Member looks at a full account of my examination before the Commission, I pledge myself that he will find that I

fully explained to the Commission that it was a Parliamentary Committee scheme.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am bound to accept the explanation of the right honourable Gentleman, but in reading these Minutes and the Report of the Commission there is no reference made to a Parliamentary Committee scheme. It was referred to throughout that Commission, and in the Report of that Commission, as "Mr. Chamberlain's scheme." The right honourable Gentleman sat on that Committee, and he did in his Report attempt to controvert that statement. Well, now, Mr. Speaker, it is all very well for honourable Gentlemen opposite to come down to the House at this time of day and ask for a Commission of Inquiry. They did not want a Commission of Inquiry before the election of 1895. The right honourable Gentleman the Leader of the House does not like to hear of his election card. I am very glad to hear that the right honourable Gentleman does not mind being told that he gained votes in East Manchester under false pretences. I have a copy of that very card in my hand. It was a canvassing card, and according to the usual routine in electioneering one of these cards was left at every house in the right honourable Gentleman's constituency by his friends. But the right honourable Gentleman did not disown them until after the election, and after he had been returned by a considerable majority. It is all very well to go down to a constituency where your friends make all kinds of promises, and then after these promises have done their work to say that you disown the promises of your friends. The right honourable Gentleman would not do that in private life. If on his estate in Scotland his agent had made a promise of a pension to one of his aged servants he would not disown that promise, but would fulfil it like a gentleman. Some honourable Gentlemen seem to forget altogether what is due to political promises, and act as if these promises need not be fulfilled. For my own part I am quite sure that there are 121 Gentlemen opposite who, at any rate, know perfectly well that these promises were made at the General Election. I have here a copy

Secretary of State for the Colonies.

of the Memorial to the Government, signed by these 121 Unionists. In that Memorial they express their opinion—

"That a definite attempt should be made to fulfil the pledges given at the late General Election by the Members of the Government on the subject of Old-Age Pensions."

These honourable Gentlemen understood that, in spite of the denial and the minimising words of the right honourable the Colonial Secretary that pledges had been given at the General Election, and, therefore, they solemnly asked that a definite attempt should be made to legislate in fulfilment of the pledges given by the Government. These honourable Gentlemen knew that they were elected largely by their constituents on these promises, that old-age pensions would be given to the working classes. It is all very well, after having made these promises, now to propose an inquiry. They put the cart before the horse; they ought to have made the inquiry first, and then made the promises after. But they first made the promises and got into office by them, and then they come to say, "We must see whether it is practicable for us to carry out these promises or not." Well, Mr. Speaker, we have had the Report of the Rothschild Committee, which considered scheme after scheme of old-age pensions; the Parliamentary scheme, Sir Henry Drummond's scheme, the Rev. James Wilkinson's scheme, a scheme relating to Friendly Societies, the scheme of the honourable Member for Bow and Bromley, the Booth scheme, and many others; but the Rothschild Committee said they could not recommend any one of them, and all they did was to give the working classes some good advice. The right honourable Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies says, however, that the resources of civilisation are not exhausted. And what are these sources of civilisation which are going to be employed? They are the resources which we hear of in the bankruptcy court, when the lawyers keep on asking questions until no money is left for the expectant creditor. We are to have inquiry after inquiry. The Aged-Poor Commission sat from January 1893 till January 1895, during which they asked 18,000 questions. The Rothschild Committee sat from July 1896 to July 1898, so that altogether we have had no less than

four years' inquiry into the subject which the right honourable Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies stated at the General Election was so simple that anybody could understand it. The Aged-Poor Commission consisted of 19 members; but, says the right honourable Gentleman, in his Report—

“That for such a task the numbers of that Commission seem to us to be too great, especially as being largely composed of members identified with schemes which were openly and widely divergent.”

The course now proposed is to refer the subject to a Committee of 17 Members, 19 having proved too numerous. But why should 17 Members be the exact body which will discover a solution to this question? I say that it is not the duty of 17 Members of the House of Commons to endeavour to extricate the Government from their difficulties; but it is the duty of the 19 Members of the Cabinet to formulate a scheme for themselves. I maintain that the present action of the Government is only a mean manoeuvre to get out of their election promises. We, on the Liberal side of the House, have been taunted with the Newcastle Programme; but the late Government, at any rate, were never afraid of placing their proposals before the House of Commons. At the end of the present Parliament I imagine that the Members must be regarded as a set of very learned men, for at the instigation of the Government we are inquiring into pretty nearly every subject under the sun, but without much result. Our complaint is that, while the Government are inquiring, they are spending the money. They have had large surpluses at the commencement of their tenure of office, yet on this question, of which the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Birmingham stated he hoped for another Chancellor of the Exchequer and another period of surpluses—we have had that period of surpluses and that other Chancellor of the Exchequer, but not old-age pensions for the working classes. The Government, instead, have endeavoured to pension nearly everyone else. There was no Royal Commission of Inquiry before passing the Agricultural Rating Act. There was no Royal Commission before passing the Irish Landlord Relief Bill; a Royal Commission was not needed before the doles to the Voluntary schools, or for the re-

mission of the tobacco duty. The present Government have increased the expenditure of the country by from £18,000,000 to £20,000,000 per annum, which is actually nearly the amount which would have secured to every man and woman in the country at the age of 65 a pension of 5s. per week. I say if they had been in earnest about old-age pensions they would not have pressed the Agricultural Rating Bill, they would not have taken the duty off tobacco, or have granted the doles to the Voluntary schools, but they would have had a sum of £4,000,000 with which to initiate an old-age pensions scheme. Now, I do think that at the last election the Party opposite, which has been called the Patriotic Party, did pander to the most sordid instincts of the electorate. They went before the electors and said, “Only vote for us and we will give you a pension.” Of course, if you talk to a man about Home Rule, or the British Empire, or anything else, he is not very much interested, but if you promise him 5s. a week when he is 65 years of age he will take far more notice of that than even the grandest scheme about the British Empire which you could lay before him. By this scheme they hit upon the very best means of attracting the working classes, and consequently it was an attempt to bribe the electors by the Party opposite, not with their own money but with the money of the nation. Now, the right honourable Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Colonies says, “Oh, yes; we do not know how to carry this out. Appoint a Committee to see what can be done.” I may point out that a number of Committees have already been appointed, and this is the proposal made this afternoon to carry out the pledges of the Government. All I have to say is that I have an Amendment on the Paper which embodies my views upon this subject, and I beg leave to amend it in a certain degree. I beg leave to move to add to my Amendment after the word “fulfilment,” in the last line but one, to insert these words—

“This House considers that further inquiry means unnecessary delay in the fulfilment of the pledges given at the last General Election by Members of the Government on the subject of old-age pensions.”

Those are words which are taken directly from the memorial which was presented

to the Government from honourable Gentlemen opposite. As the Leader of the Opposition and the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Fife have stated that they cannot vote for this Amendment, I am sorry to find that I have placed myself in antagonism to them. The Amendment I have placed on the Paper, however, embodies my views absolutely, and I am sorry the right honourable Gentlemen on the Front Bench cannot support it.

MR. BOUSFIELD (Hackney, N.): I have listened to the speeches of Gentlemen opposite, and I must confess that I have not heard one single sentence which can be called an argument against the proposal of the Government. We have heard a good deal about election cards and election pledges, the utter irrelevancy of which is perfectly obvious when we remember that the Government have not even repudiated such a pledge, if they ever gave one upon the subject. But so far from disowning any pledge, we have had from the Government a distinct pledge that they intend to deal with this question before the close of the present Parliament. I do not know how honourable Members on the other side can possibly call that disowning election pledges. The Government have, through the Colonial Secretary, given a distinct pledge to deal with this question during the present Parliament. Therefore, that being so, the only question before the House is whether or not what is proposed is the most sensible way of dealing with the matter. The Reports of the Commission and the Committee which have previously considered this subject are absolutely inconclusive as to the result. They have, however, cleared a great deal of ground, and they have shown us a great many things that will not do. They have put up certain warning posts and cautions which will be extremely useful to us when we come to deal with this question by an Act of Parliament, for the question is a great deal more thorny than anybody ever thought it was a few years ago. Notwithstanding the opposition which comes from some honourable Members on the other side of the House, I think everybody will see that the most reasonable way of making some advance with this scheme during the current Session is to appoint a Commission to con-

sider the various propositions which have been placed before the House to see how the subject can be best dealt with. Therefore, under these circumstances, I venture to think that the less that is said about this matter on the other side of the House the better.

MR. BROADHURST (Leicester): I should certainly not have said a word in this Debate had not the Colonial Secretary mentioned my name in connection with a statement made by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Fife. I think it has all arisen out of a statement made by the Colonial Secretary a week or two back in the country, in which he appears to have said that my honourable Friend the Member for Colne Valley and myself had joined a pension society which made it a condition that first of all the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England should take place before the pensions should be provided. Now that is entirely misleading altogether. It is altogether unwarranted and, I may say, also untrue. I am sure the Colonial Secretary could not have made such a statement had he known the true facts of the case; and had he cared to make inquiries of the honourable Baronet the Member for Colne Valley or myself he could have been informed exactly of what actually took place. It is perfectly true that there were some people who proposed to disestablish and disendow the Church, and that with the funds thus placed at the disposal of the State to give old-age pensions. I attended that meeting and made a speech, and my honourable Friend the Member for Colne Valley also made a speech. I may say, however, that both of us distinctly and definitely dissociated ourselves from any idea that a pension must depend upon either disendowment or disestablishment. On the contrary, we refused to associate ourselves with such a society that imposed such a condition, and from the commencement it was only upon one occasion that I met those Birmingham gentlemen who had made this proposal. I know what my honourable Friend said at that meeting, and I know what I said myself, and we both distinctly dissociated ourselves altogether from it, and our argument was that the time had not arrived for disendowment and dis-

establishment, and that there were other means at the disposal of the State sufficiently ample to meet all the necessities for old-age pensions if the Government thought proper to lay their hands upon those means. The Colonial Secretary has made a statement which is entirely incorrect, and which I cannot believe he would have made had he been acquainted with the statement which I have just submitted to the House. May I say that I do not wish this statement to be taken as any apology for keeping up disestablishment and disendowment. I am in favour, and have been all my life, of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England, although I must not give my reasons why at the present time. I still maintain in regard to this question that neither my honourable Friend nor myself ever by word or deed or act ever agreed to any such a ridiculous proposition as that of advising that old-age pensions should wait till the State Church had disgorged its money and placed it at the disposal of the people to whom it justly belongs. With regard to the Motion before the House I think I may say this, that had my honourable Friend gone to a division upon it I should certainly have supported him. I sat for two years on one Commission inquiring into this question, and I am sure the labours given by the members of that Commission were almost exhaustive of the subject. Every class of witness and every person who could throw the least light upon the subject was examined at great length by that Commission, which was largely composed of gentlemen who were supposed to have great and large information upon the subject. The right honourable Gentleman the Colonial Secretary was one of the most prominent members of that Commission. Mr. Booth, who is as great an authority as any living man can be on this subject, was also a member of that Commission, and many other highly capable gentlemen gave their assistance. I am perfectly satisfied myself that there cannot be much information obtained by the Select Committee about to be appointed. Anybody who knows the working of the Committees of this House, especially on a subject of this kind, with 17 members to examine every witness that may come before them, is aware that they will not be able to report this year, and they will have to ask

to be reappointed next year. By this time next year the right honourable Gentleman sitting opposite knows perfectly well that he will have arrived nearly at the end of his natural existence in the present Parliament. This Parliament will have come to its end by that time. (Ministerial cries of "No, no!") I say yes; and I am not so sure that it will not come to an end before that time. Another Budget like the last would about bring things to such a crisis that the Government would not last 12 months, to say nothing of 18 months longer. This proposal to-night will carry over the inquiry to the next General Election, when you will play the same game again with the election cards that was played at the last election, and the people will have to run again for the fulfilment of your pledges. The vine and fig tree around your own cottage will be painted again, and the old-age pension scheme will be again brought forward and will be again vamped up for another occasion. I was in a district the other day, and noticing a great deal of litter and dirt about it, I asked the people what steps they took to clear the dirt away. They answered "Oh, we sweep it about until we lose it." Now, that is precisely what you are doing with the old-age pensions. You have had four years which have been spent in attempting to redeem your promises and tidying up, and now you are sweeping it about trying to lose it until the General Election. The right honourable Gentleman the Colonial Secretary thought fit to unjustly bring my name into the Debate upon this question or I should not have referred to it. I much regret that my honourable Friend is not going to divide the House upon this question. I am a loyal, docile, and obedient follower of my right honourable Friends on the Front Bench, but there are times when the most obedient child takes a line of its own, and I think if ever there was a time when such an act was justifiable it would be in supporting the Amendment drawn up by my honourable Friend, who has only adopted the language of honourable Gentlemen on the opposite side, and I think we could well have justified his action and position in any assembly of men in the country. I regret that I shall not have the opportunity of voting for his Amendment.

*MR. LECKY (Dublin University) : I cannot help regretting that the Government are not prepared to accept more readily than they appear to be inclined to do the fact that the question of old-age pensions has already been submitted to two singularly able Commissions, whose inquiries have extended over a great many months and been conducted with the assistance of the best expert knowledge that could be found in the country. After a long and patient inquiry these two Commissions have come to the conclusion that of all the various schemes proposed not one was feasible, or at least capable of being recommended, and they could not themselves discover any scheme of old-age pensions which would not bring the most grave and serious disadvantages. I think the inference to be drawn from a circumstance like this is that the Government ought to drop the question, because in the state of public opinion prevailing no scheme is really feasible. I believe I am in a minority on this subject, but I venture to think that I am not altogether isolated in thinking that this is one of the most dangerous questions that have ever been discussed in Parliament, and that it would have been very much better if we had not gone so far as we have done. Some of the best supported schemes have been those of Mr. Booth; but the result of those schemes would be to add to our annual expenditure a sum fully equal to the whole amount of the interest on the National Debt which has been swept away since the Peace of 1815. I do not say that a country so enormously rich as this country now is might not bear this immense increase of expenditure, but I would ask the House to realise what might happen supposing any great change takes place. Suppose that the United States becomes a free trade country and drives us out of our special markets; suppose that our great cotton trade passes to one of those Eastern countries where the cheapest labour exists in unlimited supply; suppose you are involved in another great war, bringing with it another great debt—how would you meet the obligations which such a scheme must impose upon you, and which you cannot deny, without producing the most terrible social catastrophe? You may take the more limited schemes connected with the friendly societies and so

on; but even then results would arise which would extend very far. Take the effect of an old-age pension scheme upon wages. It is hardly conceivable that it would not have a most serious effect upon them. It may not directly depress the whole body of wages, but it must tell rapidly upon those of the class who are approaching the age limit which has been chosen, and who are the very class whom we are most anxious to help. If it does not depress wages directly, it will at least prevent their natural rise, and if the Government with their vast resources act independently of the great friendly societies and the other benefit societies which are doing so much to provide for old age, it will certainly injure, and very possibly destroy and ruin a large proportion of these societies, which are among the best forms of providence existing in this country. If, on the contrary, it operates through the societies, it will lead to other difficulties of the gravest kind. It will involve the State in the finances of those societies which are sometimes very dubious. It would act with the greatest partiality, for the friendly societies exist mainly in England, only to very small extent in Scotland, and hardly at all in Ireland. To give pensions through the friendly societies would create another Irish question, for the portion of Imperial taxation spent in Ireland would become much smaller than at present. It would create another woman question, for women are almost entirely excluded from friendly societies, and you will find that in different employment and states of life the motives for saving money and increasing income are with equally industrious and equally provident men wholly different. The whole life plan of a small farmer, whose farm will be with him till the end, is different from that of a working man, whose income may be much larger, but depends upon his health and strength. The one man will probably expend all he can in improving his farm, and will save a little or nothing, and the other will aim chiefly at acquiring an independent income. A great number also are too poor to lay by anything out of their wages. It is impossible that you can start a Measure of this kind without its leading to the gravest indirect and often unsuspected consequences. There is no

real analogy between the pensions which are largely of the nature of deferred pay, which an employer gives to those which are actually in his employment, and the Government pensions given to those who are in no degree bound to them or employed by them. In Holland, where the Government has dealt with great sagacity and great boldness with social questions, a Commission like that we have had in England has been lately held, and it has arrived at essentially the same conclusion. In my own opinion no general pension scheme can work efficiently without the German system of compulsion, and without inquisitorial powers for examining into the real amount of small incomes which would be practically impossible in England, while the liabilities it would entail could hardly be exaggerated—

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt the right honourable Gentleman, but although the Motion opens a wide field for debate, I think he is going beyond the terms of the Motion in discussing the different schemes of old-age pensions.

*MR. LECKY: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and all I can say is that, in my opinion, the elements of this problem are much more complex than might have been assumed from the tenour of this Debate. I trust that the Dutch Report will be translated into English, and that the Government will lay it before the new Committee, because it will throw a great deal of light on this subject. I will not pursue my argument further, but I will say that if we are to have legislation on this subject, it is certainly far better that we should have a new inquiry into it, because the result of the previous inquiries have been purely negative. It seems to me that it would be madness to embark on legislation in the present circumstances and on such evidence. I must confess that, personally, I think it is a mistake not to drop the subject altogether as a thing which is not likely to work. I fear that the result of this new inquiry may be to raise hopes which you cannot fulfil, and which may, nevertheless, lead to a great deal of rash and dangerous action.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out all the words after the word 'That,' and add the words, 'having regard to the fact that a Royal Commission and a Special Committee have within the last four years reported upon the condition of and the providing pensions for the aged poor, this House considers that further inquiry is not likely to shed further light on the subject, and that the Government should undertake the responsibility of making such proposals as they may deem good.'"—(Mr. Logan.)

MR. LOGAN (Leicester, Harborough): I move this Amendment because I do not for one single moment believe that this move on the part of the Government is intended to facilitate the settlement of this old-age pensions question. I believe that the appointment of this Committee—and I doubt whether any man on the opposite side of this House will, in his heart of hearts, dispute that what I am saying is absolutely true—if granted, would simply be to go into this question *de novo*, and would put off, at any rate, for five or six years, the settlement of this question, thereby relieving the Government of their present difficulty, into which the right honourable Gentleman the Colonial Secretary has got them. If this Committee was intended to recognise the fact that every worker in this country is entitled, in his declining years, when he is past work, to a pension, then I should not at all hesitate to support this proposal. Even if it were intended that this Committee should consider the best means of finding the money necessary, and of considering the question of how to distribute it, then I should most heartily and cordially support the proposal of the Government. But people outside think that the Government are playing with this question here in the House, and I frequently doubt, when I hear of the condition of the people, whether it is worth while discussing here at length, as it was discussed on the Wednesday when this Old Age Pensions Bill was before the House to the exclusion of the millions of poor people who in this country are now verging upon starvation, and who are very anxiously expecting an Old-Age Pensions Bill. When I heard the Colonial Secretary talk as he did a few moments ago, I doubt very much whether he realises the magnitude of this question. There are to-day in

England, according to the right honourable Gentleman's own showing, millions of people only just able to keep above starvation point, and to show how the people out of doors are anxiously watching, let me read just a few short words from a letter which I got this morning. The writer never dreamt that this question was coming on to-day. Here is the letter from a man in a village close to my constituency, and in it he says—

"Here in this village we are considerably interested in the old-age pensions question. There are a considerable quantity of old men and women here receiving parish relief, and some of them are just at starvation point."

After the years that had been spent by different tribunals in investigating this question, one should think that there must be sufficient evidence in possession of the Government to enable them to come to a definite policy upon the subject.

Mr. F. S. MENDEL (Plymouth): I rise for the purpose of seconding the Amendment. I gather that the right honourable Member for Dublin University (Mr. Lecky) is opposed to all schemes for old-age pensions, because he has referred to what, in his opinion, is the present duty of the Government—namely, that they should drop this question. Notwithstanding that declaration, however, I also understood the right honourable Member to say that he intended to vote for the Committee of Inquiry. That position does not seem to provide a very hopeful prospect for those who consider this to be one of the most pressing and most urgent questions of social reform in the country. Reference has been made to the renewed pledge given by the Government. I do not know whether this renewed pledge is to be something like the renewal of the Bill. In this particular instance the Bill is too long overdrawn already, and the best thing that the Government can do is to frankly face it and meet it. Not only did the speeches of the Colonial Secretary, but those of the Duke of Devonshire and others, before the last General Election clearly indicate that the subject of Old-Age Pensions hold a front place in the Government's programme and that they were carefully considering the matter, but that, in fact, it was the intention of the Government to legislate on this subject at an early

date. In spite of these facts, however, their first act was to appoint a Committee, and now that that Committee has reported, their second act is to appoint another. In my opinion this is nothing more nor less than trifling with the subject, and therefore I beg to second the Amendment of my honourable Friend.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I hope the House may be content without any very long delay to allow us to appoint this Committee, or, at all events, to divide on the Question as to whether it is to be appointed or not. I have listened with attention to the speeches, and I totally fail, with the best will in the world, to understand the reasoning upon which this Amendment is founded. The honourable Member who moved it told us there have been one Royal Commission and one Committee already, and, therefore, any other Committee must be unnecessary and a mere excuse for delay. There might have been some reason for that contention if the Commission or the Committee had suggested any practical scheme upon which the Government might make practical proposals to the House. But it is perfectly notorious that they have not made such proposals, and though I entirely agree with the honourable Member that that fact does not relieve the Government of the responsibility of looking into the question on their own account, it surely is a sufficient argument for appointing another Committee, with all the information behind it which has been collected by the preceding Committee, to see if they cannot aid the House and the Government in a problem, the difficulty and complexity of which is admitted on all hands. The honourable Gentleman is afraid that under cover of the time that a Committee takes to Report, the Government will escape any responsibility which they may have undertaken either at the time of the last General Election or before or subsequent to it. The honourable Gentleman, who is so much occupied with electioneering devices, must know perfectly well that, when we go to the country and have to give an account of what we have done or failed to do, it will be a very poor excuse to those constituencies who have based their hopes on old-age pensions, to say that there have been several inquiries, and that none of them had led

Mr. Logan.

to anything, and that the last inquiry by the Committee lasted so long that the Government was not in a position to undertake the matter themselves. The honourable Gentleman knows a good deal about electioneering, and he must know perfectly well that, were that excuse sound or unsound, were it based on sound policy or less suitable motives, no excuse will be admitted by those whom the honourable Gentleman represents, and if we are not able to find some method of either solving or making a practical step towards a solution of this most difficult problem, neither Committees nor Commissions will protect us from the consequences of that public misfortune.

MR. LOGAN: I had not the slightest intention of inferring that there are electioneering considerations. My consideration is the present need of the poor people.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I confess, if that is all, I really cannot understand why the honourable Gentleman should think that their needs are less likely to be adequately provided for because two abortive inquiries are to be followed by an inquiry which we hope may not be abortive. I take, I must say, very little interest in all these Party recriminations over election pledges. A certain card issued in my own constituency, and, I gather from the honourable Gentleman, issued in other constituencies also, has afforded a great deal of satisfaction to honourable Members opposite, of which I should be extremely sorry to deprive them. If they want my opinions on the subject, my opinions are to be found in my election address and my election speeches. I dealt with the question of old-age pensions and the modifications of the Poor Law both in my address and in my speeches, and to every word I said on those occasions I adhere. I expressed myself, I hope, with a caution which the inherent difficulties of the question rendered necessary to a person in a responsible position who had to touch upon it. But that I hoped at the time of the General Election, and that I led my constituents to hope that we should be able to do something in this Parliament on the question of the aged poor is true. I still adhere to that view. I still main-

tain that hope, and I confess I feel, if it be indeed possible to do anything for the aged poor in the course of this Parliament, that the hope which I led my constituents to entertain will, either by the fault of the Government or by circumstances which are altogether outside their power, be proved to be illusory. Now that is true enough, and honourable Gentlemen opposite may make what they choose of that statement. Honourable Members opposite are never tired of saying that we induced the electorate to support us rather than them at the last election by the fact that we put this question of old-age pensions so prominently before them. I really do not know that we hold a monopoly of the subject in our election addresses and speeches, nor do I know that honourable Members opposite abstained from all reference to the question when they were courting their constituents. At the election of 1895 it was in doubt who was to be the Government, and the electors decided by a very large majority that the Government should be drawn from the Unionist Party. The reason for that, honourable Gentlemen opposite say, was that the Unionist Party promised old-age pensions. But the other side promised old-age pensions just as much.

SEVERAL HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Did they not? I think they said over and over again that the question of old-age pensions was no monopoly of the Unionist Party. Let us hear no more, therefore, of their extraordinary argument that the last General Election was decided on the question of old-age pensions. What it was, do doubt, largely decided upon was this. Both Parties came forward and said they were anxious to deal with what are now called social problems; but the Unionist Party were able to say that they had no great constitutional revolution to carry out before dealing with those problems, and honourable Gentlemen opposite were not in that fortunate position, and upon that distinction there may have been some changes of votes in the constituencies where these subjects were chiefly dealt with. But I am not aware that any honourable Gentlemen

opposite have abstained from intimating to their constituencies that they were not less anxious than their Unionist opponents to bring forward a satisfactory scheme of old-age pensions. It must be distinctly understood that the Government do not consider themselves bound to wait necessarily for the Report of the Committee before bringing forward a scheme. We do not think that that is a necessary consequence of appointing a Committee. We hope that the general lines of such a scheme may be indicated within a period which will enable us to have the full advantage of the weight of the advice of the Committee before we present any plan of our own. But even before that period arrives it is quite clear that we may derive great advantage from the labours of the Committee, even though they have not completed their Report, and we should not consider ourselves prohibited, if other circumstances appeared favourable, from bringing forward our own scheme because the labours of the Committee had not reached their full termination. We do not appoint this Committee to shift on to other shoulders a responsibility that belongs to us, nor to delay legislation on the subject; but we say that, inasmuch as two inquiries already held have proved barren, so far as schemes are concerned, inasmuch as that Committee and that Commission, though they have collected a mass of valuable materials, have made no concrete proposal, the Government believes that it is wise and prudent to appoint a Committee to undertake the task at the point at which those two bodies left it. That seems to me a plain, practical, and statesmanlike course, and I hope that the House will not make this proposed appointment of a Committee the excuse for discussing the whole question of old-age pensions, but would come to a decision without delay.

SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I agree with the right honourable Gentleman that in his address to the electors of Manchester he stated his views with regard not only to the pension question, but to the question of the modification of the Poor Law. I believe that no pension scheme will be effective that does not deal with the question of the modification of the Poor Law. It is out of a modification of the Poor Law

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alone that we will be able to provide the funds necessary for a pension scheme. Therefore it seems to me that the reference to the Committee should embrace the question of the Poor Law.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: It does.

SIR J. PEASE: It does not do it directly, and but for the admission of the right honourable Gentleman I should have taken the opportunity when the Committee comes to be reappointed, as it must be at the beginning of next Session, to get the Poor Law included in the reference to the Committee.

SIR W. FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): As the Government is taking a course which may expedite the solution of this question, I am not prepared to vote for the Amendment. The right honourable Gentleman who has just spoken has said that at the election of 1895 the Unionist Party had not a monopoly of promises with regard to old-age pensions. I agree that promises were made on both sides, but there was a difference between them which the right honourable Gentleman carefully avoided. He and his colleagues spoke as responsible Ministers of the Crown at the time, while on the other side they spoke simply as irresponsible persons. I shall vote for the appointment of the Committee, not because it is to be a largely increased Committee, but because it is to try to find among the materials already existing some practical solution of the question.

MR. SEELY (Lincoln): I gladly support the Motion, and hope that while the Committee is sitting the Government and the House of Commons will try to come to some definite conclusion in their own minds as to how much of the money of the country they think it would be wise and reasonable to devote to this question. I believe that one of the reasons for the inconclusive result of all previous Committees has been that no one has come to any definite decision as to what amount of money the country would be prepared to spend in this matter.

***MR. SPEAKER:** That question hardly comes under this Motion.

MR. SEELY: I hope this Parliament will be known as the one that really made provision for the aged poor.

MR. HAZELL (Leicester): It appears to me that the most hopeful statement from the Treasury Bench on this subject has been the statement of the First Lord of the Treasury that it is very possible that the Government will not wait until this Committee has come to a conclusion on the inquiry. I hope that if the Committee reports before the end of this year the Government will bring in a Bill of some kind next year.

MR. MADDISON (Sheffield, Brightside): There is nothing in the reference to the Committee to prevent them reporting in favour of a scheme of mere outdoor relief, and the very vagueness of the Motion, apart from any other defect that I may see in it, is sufficient

to make me vote against it. I cannot but feel that this question will be delayed and delayed until this Parliament goes out altogether.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out all the words after 'That,' and add the words, 'having regard to the fact that a Royal Commission and a Special Committee have within the last four years reported upon the condition of and the providing pensions for the aged poor, this House considers that further inquiry is not likely to shed further light on the subject, and that the Government should undertake the responsibility of making such proposals as they may deem good.'"

Question put—

"That the words proposed to be left out to the word 'infirm,' inclusive, stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes 263; Noes 93.—(Division List No. 94.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
 Allsopp, Hon. George
 Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
 Ascroft, Robert
 Asher, Alexander
 Atkinson, Right Hon. John
 Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
 Bagot, Capt. Joceline FitzRoy
 Bailey, James (Walworth)
 Baker, Sir John
 Balcarres, Lord
 Baldwin, Alfred
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. Gerald W. (Leeds)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.)
 Banbury, Frederick George
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell
 Barry, Rt. Hn. A. H. Smith- (Hunts)
 Barry, Sir Francis T. (Windsor)
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Barton, Dunbar Plunket
 Bathurst, Hn. Allen Benjamin
 Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
 Begg, Ferdinand Faithfull
 Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
 Bethell, Commander
 Bhowaggee, Sir M. M.
 Bigwood, James
 Bill, Charles
 Blundell, Colonel Henry
 Bolitho, Thomas Bedford
 Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
 Boulnois, Edmund
 Bousfield, William Robert
 Bowles, Capt. H. F. (Middlesex)
 Bowles, T. Gibson (King's Lynn)
 Brassey, Albert
 Brodbrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
 Brown, Alexander H.
 Burdett-Coutts, W.
 Burt, Thomas
 Butcher, John George

Buxton, Sydney Charles
 Carlile, William Walter
 Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson-
 Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
 Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
 Cayzer, Sir Charles William
 Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, East)
 Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
 Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
 Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r)
 Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Charrington, Spencer
 Chelsea, Viscount
 Clare, Octavius Leigh
 Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)
 Clarke, Sir Edwd. (Plymouth)
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Cochrane, Hn. Thos. H. A. E.
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
 Compton, Lord Alwyne
 Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
 Cornwallis, Fiennes Stanley W.
 Courtney, Rt. Hn. Leonard H.
 Cranborne, Viscount
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cross, H. Shepherd (Bolton)
 Cruddas, William Donaldson
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalbiac, Colonel Philip Hugh
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
 Donkin, Richard Sim
 Dorington, Sir John Edward
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
 Drage, Geoffrey
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
 Elliot, Hn. A. Ralph Douglas

Fardell, Sir T. George
 Farquharson, Dr. Robert
 Fellowes, Hn. Ailwyn Edward
 Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
 Firbank, Joseph Thomas
 Fisher, William Hayes
 Fison, Frederick William
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
 Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
 Fry, Lewis
 Galloway, William Johnson
 Garfit, William
 Gedge, Sydney
 Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H. (City of Lond.)
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Gilliat, John Saunders
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hon. John Edward
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
 Graham, Henry Robert
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Green, Walford D. (Wednesbury)
 Greene, W. Raymond- (Camba.)
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Gunter, Colonel
 Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Hall, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Halsey, Thomas Frederick
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord George
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hardy, Laurence
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Heath, James
 Heaton, John Henniker
 Henderson, Alexander
 Hoare, Ed. Brodie (Hampst'd)

Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Hobhouse, Henry
 Holland, Hn. Lionel R. (Bow)
 Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
 Howard, Joseph
 Hozier, Hn. James Henry Cecil
 Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
 Hudson, George Bickersteth
 Hughes, Colonel Edwin
 Hutton, John (Yorks., N.R.)
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
 Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
 Johnson-Ferguson, Jabez Edw.
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Jones, Wm. (Carnarvonshire)
 Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt.Hn Sir U.
 Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir J. H.
 Keswick, William
 Kimber, Henry
 King, Sir Henry Seymour
 Kitson, Sir James
 Knowles, Lees
 Lafone, Alfred
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawrence, Sir E. Durning-(Corn)
 Lawson, Sir John Grant (Yorks)
 Leese, Sir Jos. F. (Accrington)
 Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
 Leng, Sir John
 Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
 Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (L'pool)
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowles, John
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Lubbock, Rt. Hon. Sir John
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Lyell, Sir Leonard
 Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdonald, John Cumming
 McCalmont, Col. J. (Antrim, E.)
 McIver, Sir L. (Edinburgh, W.)
 Maple, Sir John Blundell
 Marks, Harry H.

Martin, Richard Biddulph
 Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.
 Maxwell, Rt. Hn. Sir Herbert E.
 Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
 Melville, Beresford Valentine
 Middlemore, John Throgmorton
 Monckton, Edward Philip
 Monk, Charles James
 Moon, Edward Robert Percy
 Morgan, Hn. F. (Monmouthsh.)
 Morrell, George Herbert
 Mount, William George
 Muntz, Philip A.
 Murray, Rt.Hn A. Graham (Bute)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Myers, William Henry
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
 Percy, Earl
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Pilkington, Richard
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Pretymann, Ernest George
 Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
 Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Richardson, J. (Durham)
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
 Round, James
 Royds, Clement Molyneux
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Rutherford, John
 Ryder, John Herbert Dudley
 Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
 Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
 Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
 Savory, Sir Joseph
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Simeon, Sir Barrington

Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, Jas. Parker (Lanarks.)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Stanley, Edwd. Jas. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stephens, Henry Charles
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
 Stock, James Henry
 Stone, Sir Benjamin
 Strauss, Arthur
 Strutt, Hon. Charles Hedley
 Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
 Sutherland, Sir John
 Tennant, Harold John
 Thorburn, Walter
 Tomlinson, Wm. Ed. Murray
 Tritton, Charles Ernest
 Valentia, Viscount
 Verney, Hon. Richard Greville
 Walton, J. Lawson (Leeds, S.)
 Wanklyn, James Leslie
 Warde, Lt.-Col. C. E. (Kent)
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of W.)
 Wharton, Rt. Hn. John Lloyd
 Whiteley, George (Stockport)
 Whitmore, Charles Algernon
 Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
 Williams, Jos. Powell (Birm.)
 Wills, Sir William Henry
 Wilson, John (Falkirk)
 Wilson, J. W. (Wcestersh., N.)
 Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
 Wylie, Alexander
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
 Young, Commander (Berks, E.)
 Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Abraham, Wm. (Cork, N.E.)
 Allan, William (Gateshead)
 Ashton, Thomas Gair
 Bainbridge, Emerson
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Billson, Alfred
 Bolton, Thomas Dolling
 Broadhurst, Henry
 Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
 Burns, John
 Caldwell, James
 Cawley, Frederick
 Channing, Francis Allston
 Colville, John
 Crombie, John William
 Davitt, Michael
 Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Dillon, John
 Donelan, Captain A.
 Dunn, Sir William
 Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)
 Fenwick, Charles
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Gold, Charles

Gourley, Sir Edward Temperley
 Hazell, Walter
 Hedderwick, Thomas Chas. H.
 Holden, Sir Angus
 Holland, W. H. (York, W.R.)
 Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
 Jacoby, James Alfred
 Joicey, Sir James
 Keasley, Hudson E.
 Kinloch, Sir John Geo. Smyth
 Labouchere, Henry
 Langley, Batty
 Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Lewis, John Herbert
 Lough, Thomas
 Macaleese, Daniel
 McDonnell, Dr. M. A. (Qn's Co.)
 McDermott, Patrick
 Mc'Ghee, Richard
 McKenna, Reginald
 McLeod, John
 Maddison, Fred.
 Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe
 Molloy, Bernard Charles

Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
 Morley, Charles (Baconshire)
 Morley, Rt. Hn. John (Montrose)
 Morton, Ed. J. C. (Devonport)
 Moss, Samuel
 Norton, Capt. Cecil William
 Nussey, Thomas Willans
 O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
 O'Connor, Jas. (Wicklow, W.)
 O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
 Oldroyd, Mark
 Paulton, James Mellor
 Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
 Pease, Sir Jos. W. (Durham)
 Philipps, John Wynford
 Pickersgill, Edward Hare
 Power, Patrick Joseph
 Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
 Reid, Sir Robert Threshie
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
 Scott, Chas. Prestwich (Leigh)
 Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
 Soames, Arthur Welleley

Spicer, Albert
 Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
 Steadman, William Charles
 Stevenson, Francis S.
 Strachey, Edward
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
 Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
 Thomas, David Alf. (Merthyr)

Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Wallace, Robert (Perth)
 Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
 Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
 Weir, James Galloway
 Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams, John Carvell (Notts)
 Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)

Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
 Wilson, John (Govan)
 Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Huddersfield)
 Woods, Samuel
 Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Logan and Mr. Mendl.

Another Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'infirm,' to the end of the Question."—(Mr. Buchanan.)

MR. BUCHANAN, in moving to omit from the Motion the reference to the Bills introduced in the present Session dealing with old-age pensions, said that the House would see that what the Government proposed to do was to refer a group of Bills, not one of which had passed the Second Reading, to a Committee who were to inquire into them and report upon them with or without amendment to the House. He suggested that it was a most inconvenient and unusual course to take. As an illustration of that fact, he might point out that there were a group of four or five Local Option Bills at present upon the Statute Book of the House, and if this procedure was allowed, any honourable Member might move that a Committee should be appointed to consider and report as to whether any of those Bills could be adopted. So far as he could see, if that practice was to be adopted, the House was to be asked to make a very substantial alteration in Parliamentary procedure. He would urge upon the right honourable Gentleman that without those words he had all he wanted, because it was stated in the early part of the evening that the Bills to be referred to the Committee would be sent to them merely as documents or pamphlets. If that were so, the Committee would have power under the usual Motion to send for persons, papers, and records. Therefore, he moved the Amendment.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfar) seconded the Amendment. The First Lord of the Treasury, I think, in the latter part of his speech, said that the original Motion is not in accordance with the practice of the House; the Bill, which had not been read a second time, should be referred to the Select Committee. He also admits that if the words were struck out of the Resolution, the Committee would still, by treating the Bills as

papers, have power to examine and report upon them. If that is so, why should not we mention in the Resolution that these Bills shall be inquired into? I do not see why we should limit our ground. I cannot see what danger there would be, or what objection there could be of any sort or kind which this Resolution induces. It appears to me that we rather stultify ourselves if we ask for the Resolution in these terms.

Question proposed—

"That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Ordered, That a Select Committee of Seventeen Members be appointed to consider and report upon the best means of improving the condition of the Aged Deserving Poor, and of providing for those of them who are helpless and infirm; and to inquire whether any of the Bills dealing with Old-Age Pensions, and submitted to Parliament during the present Session, can with advantage be adopted either with or without Amendment.

LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL.

*MR. SPEAKER: There are various instructions on the Paper with which it is necessary for me to deal. The first two, which stand in the names of the honourable Members for Poplar and North Monmouth, invite the House to reconsider the relations between the city and the county of London. Those objects may be attained by amendment in Committee on the Bill; therefore the instructions are not in order. The next instructions are in the names of the honourable Member for North Islington and the honourable Member for

Stepney. They propose that the Committee have—

"power to insert clauses in the Bill providing for the transfer to the new local authorities of all the powers and duties of guardians of the poor, and to assimilate the Poor Law areas in London to the areas of the new local authorities."

That part of the instruction which proposes to insert a clause providing for the transfer to the local authorities of the duties of the guardians of the poor is beyond the scope of the Bill. The administration of the Poor Law is not referred to at all in the Bill, and is dealt with by separate statutes. The latter part of the instruction can be dealt with by amendment. It is in the power of honourable Members to propose any areas they choose by way of amendment in Committee. The next instruction stands in the name of the honourable Member for Hoxton. He proposes—

"That it be an instruction to the Committee that they have power to provide in the Bill for the more uniform and better assessment of the various districts of the county of London on the lines proposed in the recent Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation."

I think this instruction is open to the objection that it is not as definite as an instruction ought to be. And, further, this is a Bill to readjust the administrative areas and authorities of the county of London, and does not touch the question of local taxation except to make the necessary changes in the machinery of the collecting authorities. To introduce the question of local taxation would be to extend the Bill far beyond its proper scope, and, therefore, that is out of order. The same remarks apply to the proposed instruction of the honourable Member for Devonport to deal with the question of the taxation of ground values, and that also is out of order.

*MR. E. J. C. MORTON (Devonport) desired, upon the point of order, to know, having regard to the fact that clause 10 of the Bill proposed to amalgamate several rates, one of which was the present sewers rate, into a single rate, to be called the "general rate," and that the occupier, who paid the present sewers rate, was entitled to deduct the amount of his rate from his rent, while no such provision was allowed for any part of

the "general rate," whether clause 10 of the Bill did not alter the incidence of taxation from the owner to the occupier in respect of so much of the future "general rate" as would represent the present sewers rate, and whether, under these circumstances, it could be out of the scope of the Bill for him to make provision for moving an Amendment to alter the incidence of taxation under the Bill in the opposite sense?

*MR. SPEAKER: Objections might be raised, and properly raised, to the proposed method of dealing with the general rate and the sewer rate. It might be found inconvenient that they should be joined, and the honourable Member would be in order in proposing an Amendment to separate them. But if the instruction were agreed to, a fresh valuation of ground values and sites would have to be made throughout London; that would not obviate the difficulty raised by the honourable Member, but would create a new one. The question of ground values must be dealt with by separate legislation. The last instruction is in the name of the honourable and gallant Member for Forfarshire, and, it proposes to provide—

"For the transfer from the Metropolitan Asylums Board to the London County Council and to the new metropolitan district authorities of all or any of the powers and duties in relation to public health now exercised by the Metropolitan Asylums Board in the administrative county of London."

I think that so much of this instruction as proposes to transfer the powers of the Metropolitan Asylums Board to the County Council is beyond the scope of the Bill. This is not a Bill for extending the powers of the London County Council, but to regulate the arrangements between it and subordinate areas in which municipal authorities are to be created. So far as he proposes that some of the powers of the Metropolitan Asylums Board in relation to public health, such as are commonly exercised by municipalities, should be transferred to the new metropolitan district authorities, an Amendment to that effect would be in order if moved in Committee. Therefore his instruction is unnecessary. That disposes of all the instructions on the Paper, and therefore I am in a position to leave the Chair.

Mr. Speaker.

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith), CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, in the Chair.]

(In the Committee.)

CLAUSE 1.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES:

The first Amendment standing in the name of the honourable Member for Hoxton, is out of order, because it proposes to alter the framework of the Bill by making certain additions which are not stated in such a way as to enable the Committee to come to a decision.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 6, to leave out the word 'exclusive,' and insert the word 'inclusive,' instead thereof.—(Mr. Haldane.)

MR. HALDANE (Haddington) in moving his Amendment, said he wished to make quite clear what the Amendment was really to effect. The Committee which sat to consider the better government of London, and which reported in 1894, advocated the extension of its area and the making of a great municipality, with subservient municipalities around it. He did not, however, raise that proposition by this Amendment, which accepted the proposition of the Government to take the area of the administrative county of London and divide it into a number of so-called boroughs, and deal with those boroughs so as to give them uniform constitutions and sets of powers. In the 120 square miles which made up the administrative area of the county of London there was one square mile of remarkable character—the City of London. It had an ancient Corporation, with powers of its own, and, although it would form one of the new bodies which the Bill proposed to establish, it was remarkable that the Bill proposed to do nothing to alter its constitution. The Government could not plead in defence of the line they had taken, in leaving the City intact, that there was no material to go on, for three great Commissions had investigated the subject, each of which, although they might be divided on other points, unanimously reported that the constitution of the City, which remained untouched by the Municipal Corporation Act of

1882, was unsatisfactory, and urgently called for reform at the hands of the House. That had become more urgent at the present time when they had to speak of the corporation and constitution of the City. The local government which existed in the City until a few months ago was of a very different character from what it was to-day. Within the last 18 months there had been an entire renovation of the powers of the Corporation of the City of London which was not accompanied by any alteration in the constitution. In 1897 a Bill was passed through the House—a Private Bill—and it was always a little unfortunate, in his opinion, with regard to London matters, that so much should be done by way of Private Bill, which made a great change in the City of London. Honourable Members might remember, when the City was exempted from the Municipal Corporations Act, London government went on on very different lines from the local government in other parts of the country. Instead of new powers being given to the reformed Corporation under the Public Health Act, they were covered by means of special statutes given to a Commission called a 'Commission of Sewers.' A remarkable state of things was seen when the City was invested with new powers 18 months ago, and yet nothing had been done to bring its constitution into a more modern shape. He asked the Committee to consider the condition of the City of London with that of the new municipal boroughs which the Bill proposed to set up. The new boroughs would consist of 72 aldermen and councillors, together with a mayor, the number of aldermen being 18 and councillors 54. These councillors would be elected on a simple franchise, and women would be eligible for office in the manner provided under the Bill. But in the case of the City they had not got an ancient and complicated franchise, but an unwieldy governing body. The Parliament of the City might be said to consist of the Common Council. The Common Council consisted of 206 members, elected in a very complicated and antiquated manner, and they formed altogether a cumbrous body. Then, there were a number of aldermen—24 or 26 he believed—and these, again, were elected

in a very complicated fashion for life, and they also had certain important powers. Then there was the Lord Mayor, who, instead of being elected by either of these bodies, was elected by yet a third body, the Common Hall, which consisted of liverymen. But their franchise was not really to elect a Lord Mayor, because, through custom, it had been the practice, not to elect, but to make selections under a certain rule by which they sent up two names, not to the Common Council, not to the representative body, but to the aldermen. Well, what had been the effect on the City? The elections had become altogether uninteresting to the people. The City, which had a very large population qualified to vote, was made up of people who did not take the trouble to vote at all.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No!

MR. HALDANE: Compared with the elections in other parts of London, those in the City were the merest farce. They did not, moreover, get the best men to serve. The days had long since gone by when the proud title of the Lord Mayor of the City of London was associated with the Lubbocks, the Rothschilds, the Gibbs, and other well-known families, who bore in the minds of the public the distinction of being leaders in the City. There were, of course, brilliant exceptions, and there were honourable Members opposite who had filled that post with great distinction. In the majority of cases, however, the Lord Mayor had ceased to be the important functionary in the City he used to be. There was a still more serious condition of things when they came to consider the power that the City wielded at the present time. It exercised powers dealing with the metropolis as a whole; it controlled the markets at Islington and Smithfield, making a profit thereon. It controlled open spaces beyond a certain limit; it controlled its own police, a power which had been denied to the rest of the metropolis; it controlled the bridges. The City was the port sanitary authority; and, finally, it occupied an important position in regard to the Central Criminal Court—no small matter. All these things were, he contended, an irresistible argument for giving a better constitution to the City, rather than

leaving it with a worse constitution than that which it was proposed should be given to the bodies to be set up. Another feature of the City was that there was no provision for the paying off of its debt. Again, as to the boundary question, the City was pleading for an extension of its boundaries. By reason of the exclusion of the City the Bill made no provision for machinery to extend its boundaries. In conclusion, he said he proposed the Amendment with no desire to shear the City, and he could not believe that the Government would allow the Amendment to go past without giving some ground for refusing it, and the removal of the grievance which it sought to redress.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The question raised by the honourable and learned Member is precisely the same as that raised by the Amendment moved to the Second Reading of the Bill, and the House on that occasion determined that the Government were acting wisely in not including any alteration of the constitution of the City within the purview of this already sufficiently complicated Measure. The honourable Gentleman has said the position of the City is such, and the responsibilities of the City are such, that we ought to give it, not a worse, but a better, constitution than those we propose to give to the other municipalities created by the Bill. The words "good" and "bad" in connection with any constitution in the world—certainly municipal constitutions among others—are, after all, relative terms, and the fact that a constitution is in actual operation and that it is in working order, and that it works well, is, in my opinion, a very strong argument for leaving it alone. I think that, when the honourable Gentleman gets up and makes an attack on the constitution of the City, he should have shown that in its actual working it has proved ineffectual. One of the main objects of the Bill in regard to other parts of London is to provide a constitution which shall give to these municipalities all the dignity which municipal work ought to command. That dignity the City of London already possesses, and that alone differentiates it, and, I think, differentiates it in a very marked manner, from the other

Mr. Haldane.

areas with which we have to deal. That being so, the honourable Gentleman is bound to prove that the constitution of the City of London in practice has worked with hardship either to the citizens of the City or to some other body of the citizens of the metropolis. He has not done so, and, therefore, he seems to me to have failed in carrying his argument to a successful issue. Of course, no one denies that the City is in many respects anomalous—that it does not fit in either with the new constitution we propose to establish, or with the existing constitutions of the great municipalities in the provinces. But the anomalous character of the City of London is in no small degree due to its ancient history. The very fact that it is anomalous is a proof that it has descended to us through long centuries of English history, and if these anomalies cannot be shown to carry in their train practical ill effects, I confess I shall see them altered with very great regret. I think it will be admitted that if we are to carry this Amendment, and put down on the Paper all the consequential Amendments which will be involved, we shall introduce ourselves into an area of controversy which will make it extremely difficult to pass the Bill within any reasonable time. There is no maxim of practical politics more solidly established than that it is fatal to attempt to deal with every part of a complicated matter in one Measure. Under the conditions of modern legislation it is folly to attempt it. On the merits of the Amendment I cannot think of accepting it; but, even if I were prepared on the merits to accept the Amendment, I should, as a practical legislator, as a person more or less responsible for the allocation of the time of the House, say that the alteration or reform of the City should be deferred to a separate Measure and a different Session. Nothing in this Bill makes it more difficult than it was before to reform the City; there is nothing in it which stereotypes existing arrangements. As the Minister responsible for the conduct of this Measure, I must protest that I cannot have it complicated and overweighted by a number of questions which will inevitably arise if I am for a moment to contemplate the possibility of accepting the honourable and learned Member's Amendment. I hope, Sir, the

Committee will follow the example of the whole House, and, by a large majority, reject an Amendment which I think, in its results, will be almost fatal to the Bill.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.) said he should like to put a few points before the Committee in reply to the remarks of the right honourable Gentleman. The right honourable Gentleman had said that Epping Forest had been gained for London through the action of the City. That was precisely correct, but by what means did they do so? They did so not by drawing upon their own private purse, but by drawing upon the coal and corn dues obtained from London as a whole. With reference to the statement that little interest was taken in the wardmotes of London, he was in a position to state that little more than 1,000 out of 30,000 on the register attended the 26 wardmotes to elect 200 councillors. He found that in the great ward of Broad Street, out of no fewer than 2,301 voters on the register, and with eight members to be elected, there was only an attendance of 21 at the wardmote meeting. Coleman Street Ward, with 1,580 voters on the register, only showed an attendance of 31 at the wardmotes; Farringdon Without, with 5,175 voters on the register, showed 42 attendances at the wardmotes. It could not, therefore, be denied that the amount of interest taken in the City elections was comparatively little. His contention was that it was impossible to adequately reform the area of the County of London as a whole if they were to place one part, and that the most important part, in a different position from that which the other areas occupied. It had been said that the City was well governed. It was governed in such a way that the Corporation expenditure was something like £800,000 per annum and that of the City Commissioners of Sewers £400,000, or a total of £1,200,000. This was a vast expenditure for an area of 659 acres and a resident population of little more than 30,000. If the remainder of London were to be governed upon that principle he should like to know what the expenditure would be, and what would be the amount which the poorer portions of the metropolis would have to pay.

Civil government cost over £70,000 a year, collection and management of rates considerably over £40,000, the London Central markets over £100,000, and magistracy and police not far short of £50,000. Donations, pensions, etc., stood for more than £20,000; while educational expenses figured for only £15,500 odd. Moreover, a sum of about £30,000 had been lost to the Corporation in six years on account of friction between the Commissioners of Sewers and the Board of Guardians, the loss for the past year being no less than £10,000. What Liberals all desired, and more especially those who represented areas outside the City, was to have their fair share, not in the wealth, but in the dignity of the great City of London. He would give an analogy. What would have been thought, for example, of the great architect of the Houses of Parliament if, when erecting the buildings, he had taken no notice whatever of Westminster Hall, or of the cloisters built by Henry VIII., or of that portion of the building where the original chamber of the House of Commons stood? The fact that he harmonised the whole was one of his great claims to greatness as an architect. This was precisely what they wanted to do with reference to the City of London. They had no desire to destroy the great Guilds of the City—at least he had none—but what he did say was that they ought to take their share in forming one of those areas of which Greater London was to be composed. If the City was to be permitted to continue to hold the position it now held, without taking its share in providing for its own poor as the head of the great metropolis, then he, for one, was bitterly opposed to the new scheme.

On the return of the CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES, after the usual interval—

MR. LEUTY (Leeds, E.): To anyone accustomed to the vigorous life, both political and corporate, of the large towns of the country, it seems a great misfortune that the Corporation of the City of London has been strong enough hitherto to prevent reform coming within its own borders. This has distinctly deprived the metropolis of that influence in the country which it ought to have by reason of its enormous population and in many other ways. Who

shall say that the great power strikingly exercised by Birmingham a little while ago was not to be largely attributed to the fact that Birmingham got the full benefit of the reform of 1835 which the Corporation of the City of London successfully obstructed, and through which there had been much legislation which might have been saved. If there were any doubt on that point it would be dissipated by the Report of the Royal Commission of 1893, presided over by Mr. Courtney, which said that—

“If the two great principles of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1835—viz., first, extension of area, and, second, reform of constitution—had been applied to the City of London half a century ago, much subsequent legislation might have been spared, and there would obviously have been no necessity for the present Commission. To complete the work then left undone, and, as far as possible, on similar lines, in order to bring London into harmony with the other municipal corporations of the country, seems to be the proper solution of the problem with which we have to deal.”

We have heard a great deal lately about the repayment of debt, but the abuses that are perpetrated by the failure of reform are illustrated by the way in which the City has been permitted to deal with its debt. Some of the debts of the larger provincial cities are very great, but their assets are greater. Moreover, Parliament insists in the case of these provincial cities that their assets, even when these consist of land, must be paid for in a maximum of 60 years, though many have to be paid for in much shorter periods. But the Corporation of the City of London may borrow money for street improvements, which can hardly be called realisable assets, and if any part of their debt is paid off it is done by the expedient of the sale of properties. Then there is the injustice which arises from the different assessments made by different bodies in London. There ought to be one rate which would fall equally on all those bodies. It is useless making a rate of a shilling if it falls in one part on real value and in another part on a fancy figure considerably below real value. The evils of assessment are exaggerated in the City of London from the number of the parishes and the smallness of the population in some of them, and from the fact that many individual properties are found to be in as many as three parishes and have to be assessed by three different authorities.

Captain Norton.

An attempt is made to grapple with these evils so far as they affect the metropolis by clause 13 of the Bill, but why that effort has not been extended to the City of London it would be difficult to show with conclusiveness. It may be said that there would be greater difficulty in dealing with it in the City, and that the Bill is sufficiently complicated already without introducing the City. But the Bill does not seem to me to be particularly complicated, and it would have been more to the credit of the Government if, instead of speaking about complications and difficulty of working, they had set their hands to the work and dealt with those evils in the unreformed condition of the City. Again, the failure to reform the government of the City has caused great waste of money. The cost of administration by overseers within the City is just over £24,000, while the cost of administration in the proposed new borough of Chelsea, which is about the same size, is £3,000, or an eighth of the cost of the City. In the mere matter of registration the cost to the City is £4,000, and in Chelsea £600. The establishment, including the collection of rates—and I presume that it will not be urged that the great expenditure in the City is caused by the large amount of ground that the collector has to go over from one house to another—costs in the City just under £16,000, whereas in Chelsea it is a little over £1,600. These figures ought either to be shown to be wrong or the Government ought to give some more cogent reason than the difficulty and complexity of the subject for refusing to deal with it. I am afraid that the influence of the City has been so great with the Government as to secure not the advantage of the City, but rather that it will continue hampered by old and expensive methods. But if there is one thing proved conclusively from the past history of the various attempts made to grapple with the reform of the City it is, that the longer the delay in the matter it does not become easier, but that it will increase in difficulty and magnitude.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, Eland): The right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury began his speech by complaining of this discussion having been raised by my

honourable Friend. Now, Sir, I think it is as well that the Committee should make up its mind that this discussion is not the same as that on the Second Reading of the Bill. The discussion on the Second Reading of the Bill was chiefly on the powers to be exercised by the new authorities and by the City and the County Council respectively. The question we are discussing is the form of the government of the City alone. Honourable Gentlemen on the other side of the House should not, as they appear to have done, form a conspiracy of silence, and apparently make no attempt whatever to answer the real arguments that are put forward on this side. The right honourable Gentleman who introduced the Bill in his first speech about it said that the Bill was intended to complete, as far as may be, the local government of the metropolitan area. I should have thought that anyone who introduced a Bill of this kind would have first considered what particular local body required most reformation in its constitution. Our argument in bringing forward this Amendment is, that of all local bodies which exist in London that which most demands internal reform is the City and not the vestries. We are perfectly ready to admit that the vestries are not ideal bodies, but the City needs a great deal more reformation than the vestries and the other local bodies. I will add a few facts to those already brought forward to show that the local government areas within the City of London are clumsy, numerous, and a cause of great expense to the City; that a great deal of simplification is required; that the government is not truly representative and is largely irresponsible; that the management of the finances of the City is bad and under less control than in the municipalities. To take first of all the question of local government areas within the City, I put aside the question of the different wards which elect the Common Council. It is true that they are numerous—more numerous than they should be—more numerous than any Commission which ever sat thinks that they should be. I point out that there is another local government area besides the wards which deserves our consideration. These are the parishes for the purpose of overseeing the City, and these parishes number 112. Some of them are not much more than a

single acre in area. The Bank of England extends over three of them, and entirely includes one of them. All this is, of course, a source of very great expense indeed to the people of the City, so much so that the City pays to these authorities a sum of £24,608, whereas Chelsea for the same purposes and with an area just a little larger than the City pays £3,050. I therefore want to know how it adds to the dignity of the City—which is the only argument brought forward by the right honourable Gentleman in defence of his exclusion of the City from the Bill—to waste this money every year. It is no revolutionary suggestion that the City should be, at any rate, assisted to spend rather less money than in this wasteful manner. I go on to the question of the system of election. We on this side of the House are not necessarily enamoured with any one particular system of election. "That which is best administered is best." But there is a very strong probability that if you have not got a system in which the people of the district take any interest, a system which actually causes, by its complications, that the people cannot take any interest in it, it is extremely likely that such a system will lead to bad administration. We say that the system of the election of the mayor, for instance, by a body quite other than that over which he will preside, and the system of the election of the Common Council, is not one that is likely to lead to good government in the City. Now Lord Salisbury, who is very fond of attacking the London County Council, sometime ago made a speech, in which he said—

"The vice of the body is that it represents so large a community that men will not take an interest in its election."

That was an *a priori* argument of the Prime Minister which fell in with his views of what things should have been with regard to the London County Council, but it does not in the least fall in with the real facts of the case. As a matter of fact, in the elections of 1892, 42 per cent. of the electors went to the poll; in 1895, 48 per cent. voted; and in 1898, 50 per cent. went to the poll, which shows a steadily increasing interest all round in the affairs of the London County Council. Now, I will turn and put Lord Salisbury's test to

the City of London, and see what becomes of the vice of the men that do not take an interest in their local elections. I take the years when you would have expected that the City of London would have taken the greatest interest in the election of its Common Council, namely, the years 1893 and 1894. Those were the years in which there were proposals made for the amalgamation of the City with the London County Council. Those were the years when the defenders of the City themselves tried to urge those who were voters in the City to take some part in the elections. Upon this occasion the "City Press" wrote the day before St. Thomas's Day in 1894—

"The City elections this year will, no doubt, be watched as they have never been watched before, and it is important that citizens should show that they mean to maintain the local institutions and privileges which have been handed down to them."

Now what was the result of that appeal, and what was the result of the other appeals made to them to come and defend their privileges, which one would have thought was the first thing they would have been desirous of doing? We found that in the Lime Street Ward, where four members had to be elected, that out of 591 voters, there was only an attendance of 14 in one year, and 12 in another.

SIR E. CLARKE (Plymouth): Was there any contest?

MR. TREVELYAN: There was not a contest, and there was generally an average of one contest in the course of a year. Now, is there any other body or constituency in the country that would be satisfied with returning the same men every year, and with practically, I am bound to say, allowing these men to return themselves, for in the figures I am reading there are included all the candidates who are standing for the different wards, of whom there are between 8 and 14 in the different wards of the City. Certainly the people in the City themselves do not regard it as a matter of great credit to themselves in reference to this entire indifference which is taken in the elections. In one of these areas, in the ward of Farringdon Without, there were 5,175 voters, and in one year 42 attended, and in the other 29 attended.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER: Was there any contest?

MR. TREVELYAN: There was no contest. In this election, one of the gentlemen present asked a question. According to what appeared in the "City Press"—

"Mr. Shires asked what the Government or the County Council would think if the representatives of either body attended a meeting such as that. Out of 5,000 electors, there were not 50 present. They took no interest in their own affairs, and the apathy was enough to make one's blood run cold."

I say that such a system as this is not worthy of imitation. If the Government of the City was one to which no reproach could be attached at all; if there was nothing to say beyond this, that they did not take an interest in their elections, the point would not be of much value. But the point is, that the City in many quarters is very seriously criticised, and the fact that they themselves and their representatives care so little about criticism that they go on returning the same members as they do at present, is only an additional proof that some kind of reform is wanted. I call attention also to another fact. There are in the Corporation 232 members. Now this Bill which has been brought forward by the Government is partly directed to reducing what is undoubtedly the too numerous membership of the various vestries throughout London, and I should have thought it was worth the attention of a reforming Government on those lines to have considered whether the Common Council ought not to have its numbers reduced to something like a working number. The result of the action of a body which is so elected is, at any rate, serious, and worthy of consideration in one respect. There has never been any sufficient answer given as to why the finances of the City are in the condition in which they are at the present time, and why year after year there is a deficit; why no economies are practised, and why the debt goes on increasing. Why are the finances of the City in this condition? Why, when Parliament is reforming London government, should it choose to leave out the City of London and extend to it a privilege which is not extended to any other corporation of involving itself in debt which it is

not bound to repay by a certain date? As long as the Corporation is open to this criticism, I think the Government is bound to consider whether the City should not be put on a different basis. On this side of the House we have no feeling of dislike against the City on account of the antiquity of its institutions, for there is nothing which we are more likely to be proud of than its antiquity. We were proud of the City in the old days when it sent out trained bands to fight for the liberties of the country; we were proud of the stand made for Wilkes, and we are proud of what the City did in 1832. All that we want on this side of the House is that that antiquity should be continued in modern hands, and should be vested in some body that can carry it on under some system by which it may be enabled to continue its good work, so that we may still be proud of its present existence as we are already proud of its antiquity.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I was waiting to see whether anyone would rise to reply to the excellent speech made by my honourable Friend who has just sat down. No one having risen, I take it that no answer can be given to the very strong indictment which my honourable Friend has made against the present government of the City. We have had only one speech from the other side, and therefore I will revert to the speech of the First Lord of the Treasury. That speech was one of a kind in which, since I have been a Member of this House, I have grown very familiar with whenever the question of the reform of the Corporation of the City of London is raised, and it is this, that however appropriate it may be, the occasion is not now, and however relevant the subject matter of the Bill before the House may be, we are always told that it is not a convenient season. I remember very well the passage of the Local Government Act of 1888, and upon that occasion the present President of the Board of Trade was strongly opposed to the inclusion of the City Corporation within the purview of that Bill. Now what did the right honourable Gentleman say in reply. He said—

"The Government do not regard this as a complete Measure for the reform of local

government in London, and we hope, on some future occasion, to bring in a Bill dealing with the local area of London."

And then he went on to say—

"One of the local areas in London, of course, will be the City."

Now, I think we have a very fair claim to say that that opportunity has arisen to-day to which the right honourable Gentleman then referred, and that, as one of the local areas in London is the City, we are fairly entitled to press the Amendment which is now before the House. The First Lord of the Treasury said that the question which is raised by this Amendment has already been discussed upon the Second Reading of the Bill. I venture, with all respect, to distinctly traverse that statement. What was really decided on the Second Reading was that the Government were not willing upon the present occasion to amalgamate the City and the London County Council upon the lines more or less suggested by the Commission presided over by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Bodmin. I, for one, reluctantly, of course, accept that decision. I recognise that the Government is still determined to exclude London from its proper inheritance, and that that one square mile included in the City is still to continue to absorb the prestige and the honour and the control of things which properly belong to London as a whole. I accept that, but if I correctly apprehend the Amendment now before the House, a very different question is raised, for the objects at which this Amendment is directed are, if I may say so, upon a very much lower plane than the object which this House sought to obtain by the Amendment which was moved the other day, for the object this Amendment mainly has in view is recommended by business-like considerations and considerations of administrative convenience which must, I think, be as welcome and agreeable to the ratepayers in the City as to the ratepayers in any other part of London. The right honourable Gentleman gave illustrations of the kind of reform which he desired to see carried out if his Amendment were accepted, and perhaps I may be permitted to add to his illustrations one or two more. Take, for instance, the case of the overseers and the duties which they discharge. Now this

Mr. Pickersgill.

Bill, as it is drawn, proposes that in each metropolitan borough the borough councils shall combine the overseers, and that where there is more than one parish within the borough they shall appoint the same gentlemen as overseers for all the parishes. That is as the Bill is drawn, but there are Amendments from both sides of the House which desire the simplification of the matter, and to make the borough council, without the intervention of the overseers, discharge the duties which the overseers have hitherto performed. This evil which the present Bill seeks to correct exists in an exaggerated form in the City of London, where you have no fewer than 112 parishes with separate sets of overseers. Surely, the simplification which you desire in London as a whole should be applied also to the City, where there is far more reason for applying it than in other parts of London. Then, again, this Bill deals with assessments to this extent—it provides that under certain conditions the borough council shall appoint the assessment committee. That is a reform in a businesslike and practical manner which is much more urgently required within the square mile of the City than outside. What do we find in the City? Why, we find the most insignificant areas as units of assessment. Each parish is the assessment authority. My honourable Friend mentioned a moment ago that the Bank of England is situated in three different parishes, and wholly absorbs one of them. May I add to what he had said that the Bank of England actually appoints its own overseers, and itself assesses that part of its property which constitutes the whole of one parish, and it is also the dominating influence in the assessment of the adjoining parishes. And with what result? The Bank of England, for rating purposes, is assessed at something over £55,000. The London County Council states, upon the authority of expert opinion, that this £55,000 as the valuation of the Bank of England is grossly inadequate, and ought to be considerably over £100,000. But what can the Committee expect when the Bank of England is actually allowed to assess its own property? Just one word more before I sit down. The question of auditing has been raised, and there appears to be an impression, from some

cheers which have been raised from the other side of the House, that the City Corporation is so absolutely immaculate in regard to its proceedings that it is almost sacrilege to raise this question of the audit. I wish to speak respectfully with regard to the City Corporation, but I cannot forget that since I have been a Member of this House there has been a Select Committee which has inquired into the expenditure of the City Corporation, and it found that in 1888 a special committee of the Corporation of the City of London had spent enormous sums, amounting to thousands of pounds, out of the City's estate in a grossly improper and indefensible manner in subsidising bogus associations. In these circumstances, I think you ought to give to the City of London the same advantages, at least, and the same benefits which are given with regard to audit which you are applying to the rest of the metropolis. I only desire to say that I hope it will be understood that this Amendment certainly raises a different question from that which we discussed on the Second Reading of the Bill, and I cannot for the life of me understand why ratepayers in the City of London should object to be included in the businesslike and practical reforms which are being applied to other parts of the metropolis.

MR. BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I think it is to be regretted that we are to be allowed to discuss this Bill without any attempt being made to reply to a very important Amendment, which raises a matter which I think the Committee is fully entitled to discuss. I heard the whole speech of the right honourable Gentleman, and what I am complaining of is that there is a conspiracy of silence in regard to this Amendment, and I would therefore make an appeal to honourable Members on the other side of the House with regard to this point. I think I may say that we have no desire to obstruct this Bill, or to destroy it. But when Amendments of importance are proposed, I think we should have a reasonable discussion upon them. In his very short speech, the chief argument of the right honourable Gentleman was that we had already discussed this matter on the Second Reading, and therefore there was no necessity to discuss it again upon this

occasion. I think my honourable Friend has shown quite conclusively that the point which he now proposes is a totally different one to that which we were discussing on the Second Reading of this Bill. The point then was the question raised by the Report of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Bodmin, namely, whether the City should be amalgamated and practically absorbed by the London County Council, and whether the whole of London should be brought under the government of one body in that way. What, at all events, will be raised if the Amendment is carried is whether certain powers which the City has at present should or should not be transferred to the central body governing the whole of the metropolis. I do not think that this is a large question, as stated by the Leader of the House. His argument was, as I understood it, not so much going into the merits of the case, as the fact that this Bill did not raise the question of the City at all. I think the point I have in my mind in regard to this Amendment is, that there are certain reforms proposed in regard to the rest of the metropolis which is largely managed by the central body, and the City alone is excluded, and that other powers which the City has are not given to the rest of the metropolis, and which might very usefully be transferred to the London County Council. The right honourable Gentleman stated that by leaving out the City he did not prejudice the question, but on an occasion like this, when you are raising the whole question of London government, is it not most seriously prejudicing the question by leaving out altogether one section of it? It is quite certain that the House of Commons will not allow the same question to be discussed over and over again within a limited number of years. In consequence of not touching it on the present occasion, the result will be that the House will be prevented from discussing the question for many years to come. The honourable Gentleman said my honourable Friend had not put his finger upon any blots in the government of the City, and had not shown any particular matters which should be reformed; in fact, that he had not made out his case for proposing any alteration in the present system. The answer to that is that we have had a Royal Commission, which

pointed out very serious blots of omission and commission on the part of the City, and it pointed out something like twenty matters of great importance which it was necessary to reform, and I believe at the present moment, which is more than 40 years after that Commission reported, only about 10 per cent. of these reforms have been instituted, and every one of them of the smaller degree. There were reforms proposed with regard to the election of the mayor, aldermen and the Common Council, the selection of whom was to be placed on a more popular basis, and the reason given was that they were going to deal with these matters as questions of practical reforms. This met with the greatest possible opposition, and they had not the least intention of carrying out these reforms. I know that the honourable and learned Member for Plymouth said the other night in the Second Reading Debate that the City required no reforms. All I can say is that I do not think we should take his view upon the status of municipal reform as of very great value, because the Committee will remember that he made an emphatic declaration that the Metropolitan Board of Works was the best form of municipal government which this country had ever seen. A man who sets that Board up on such a high pinnacle has not much idea of what municipal reforms ought to be. The right honourable Gentleman in his speech has put the whole basis for this Bill which he has introduced on what I think is a right and sound business footing, namely, to give greater dignity to these local bodies, and he says that if you do that you will get a better set of men to manage local affairs. He also said that the City had got that dignity. All I say is, that they may have got the dignity, but they have not got the men. I am not speaking disrespectfully of those who govern the City, but I think every member of the Committee will admit that those principally interested in the City, such as the merchants, the capitalists, and the bankers, and so on, either practically ignore the whole government of the City, or take very little part in it, because it has no attractions for them. I think that shows conclusively that in the City they have not succeeded in attracting the best sort of men. My honourable Friend behind me urged one or two points in which it is perfectly clear that there is plenty of room for reform.

Mr. Burton.

There is the question of the audit and the question of loans. I do not want, however, to bring the right honourable Gentleman's attention so much to these particular points which have been made and which have shown that there are great blots at present in the government of the City, but what I want to bring out is this—that this Amendment, in my opinion, is not directed against the City as such, but is drawn up in the interest of the great community and the better administration of the metropolis as a whole. There are two classes of powers which the City has at the present moment, and I do think that some Amendment ought to be introduced into this Bill to enable us to discuss whether or not any of those powers should be transferred from the City to the London County Council. There is one in which the City practically administers for the whole of London, and over which it has entire control, and there are other powers which the London County Council at the present moment administer in the rest of the metropolis, but not in the City. Reference has been made already to the question of the markets, and surely that point is one in which we ought to have an opportunity in this Bill of discussing. That subject is entirely in the hands of the City of London. I think we ought to be allowed to consider whether the markets should be in the hands of a central body which would represent the interests of the metropolis at large. I am not going to say anything in regard to the administration of the markets, although I am bound to say that there has been a good many allegations which appear to have some foundation in regard to the management of these markets. There is the sum of £120,000 a year profit on those markets, and most of that money goes to the relief of the rates in the City instead of to the rates of London as a whole. Therefore I say that this is a matter which we are entitled to discuss here, for the reform in connection with these markets is one which ought to be carried out for the benefit of the whole of the metropolis, for it is not right that the profits of the markets, which are derived from London as a whole, should go to one small portion of the metropolis. Then there are other matters to which I have referred, in which the County Council have the power and jurisdiction through-

out the rest of the metropolis, but not, unfortunately, in the City as well. There was one question that ought to be controlled by the central authority for London. He did not think it was right that the City should get rid of its obligation under the Artisans' Dwellings Act, and at the same time get rid of its proper share as against the rest of the metropolis. The question of bridges was also a matter which affected the whole of the metropolis, and ought to be also under the control of the central authority. He desired to say that, so far as he was concerned, he had no desire to attack the City; he merely wished to bring it into closer touch with the rest of the metropolis.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: It appears to me that it is not needful to go into details as to the grievances brought against the City. Honourable Gentlemen will observe that these criticisms, be they well or ill-founded, are not really relevant to this discussion. All the questions which have been touched upon are questions of interest and importance; but surely it is in the just jurisdiction of any Government to say whether they will cover the whole subject in their legislation, or whether they will be more moderate in their endeavours and cover only a part. We think that the Bill would be overloaded if we dealt with all the subjects that have been specified. I do not think that there are any abuses connected with the City of London which call specially for immediate reform, but even if there are, I think we are perfectly entitled to ask the Committee to deal with the area, limited, indeed, though it be, but still surely large enough for our efforts for one Session, and which are contained between the four corners of this Bill. The honourable Gentleman complained that we have so drawn the Bill that a large number of topics which ought to be discussed cannot be discussed. The honourable Gentleman must, indeed, have a grievance when the subjects which are left in the Bill are not sufficient to satisfy the most omnivorous appetite. The course which we have pursued does not prejudice at all any scheme for the reform of the City. It does not lay down that in the opinion of Parliament the City ought not to be touched. It does not imply that the reform of the City of

London, if it is desirable, shall not be a subject which shall be dealt with by Parliament in some future Session; but it does say that in the course of the Session of 1899 it is sufficient for the Committee to deal with the vast area to which this Bill applies, and we may limit the discussions to that area, and leave untouched the complex problems which the enlargement of the City of London must invariably involve.

MR. BURNS (Battersea) said the right honourable Gentleman was entitled to any opinion he might hold as to the limits of the Bill, having regard to the large majority which he could command. The House was confronted with a Bill for the better government of London, and it did seem ridiculous to leave out from its discussion an authority which controlled Epping Forest on the one side and vast commons on the other, as well as the markets of the old metropolis. If it suited the convenience of the Government to leave the City untouched this Session, it was the misfortune of the Committee and not their fault. The fact was that successive Governments were afraid to include the reform of the City when they set about reforming other parts of the great metropolis. He was not more tender towards the City than the right honourable Gentleman was towards the area of Westminster, the Strand, Mile End, and Stepney, the local lives of which were to be disintegrated on the ground of good government. He thought the City was capable of reform and needed it, and it was a remarkable fact that it was to be left out of the Bill. Why it should be left out he failed to understand, especially when they had regard to the safeguards with which the new municipalities were to be surrounded, which were not to apply to the City. The new localities were to be subjected to an audit by the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the President of the Board of Trade, and could not spend 3d. on a cup of tea, whilst the City could spend £22,000 without exception being taken. If the City was not to be included on the ground of its antiquity, then he submitted that that in its present form could not be defended on that ground. It was no more ancient than a vestry. If they went into history some vestries had a claim to be left alone, but what would be done to those which asked

to be left alone? The Government cut down the members of them from 102, on the ground it was too large a number, to 70. The City, which was a very small area, had 206, which were to be left untouched. With regard to public works, he thought that London had a right to ask that those works which were performed by the City at the cost of London as a whole should not be left in their hands any longer, but that they should be taken over by the central authority, the County Council. It was not fair for a city with 31,000 night population and one square mile to levy a heavy duty on 5,000,000 of people of Greater London, and whether that was the appropriate opportunity or not he protested against such a course. Some honourable Members on the other side were only too anxious to defend the City when it was right or wrong, and they could never hear the word "City" mentioned unless they heard the magic words 'Epping Forest.' He ventured to say that if they had had a great municipality for London, including the City, they would have preserved more of Epping Forest than the City had; and if the City had represented the whole of London there would have been more parks and open spaces. The City, perhaps, was in some respects the most extravagantly administered square mile in the world. Admitting that the square mile was widely different from any other square mile, the amount of money spent on roads, paving, etc., was considerably disproportionate to the number of acres that were kept in order. Much that the City got credit for was what was done by other bodies. For instance, the City ought to look after its fire brigade. At the present moment the London County Council was responsible for the fire brigade and many other branches of work requiring close supervision. The City did not even do its main drainage. The fact was that the City did the more ornamental civic duties on an extravagant scale, while much of the effective work within its area was remitted to the County Council. The same fault was to be found with the assessment work of the City. The Bank of England was assessed at £55,000 a year rateable value, while on the County Council scale it ought to be assessed at £108,000. The State, for reasons best known to itself, let the old woman of Thread-

needle Street off very lightly. No Government, however, ought to allow such a difference to be made by taxing the food of the poor in Billingsgate and Smithfield markets. The sum of £22,000 per annum was spent on the Mansion House and Lord Mayor, while £120 per annum only was spent on administering the Shop Houses Act. The administration of the City was bringing about a state of things which first begat apathy, then indifference, maladministration, and corruption. He believed there was but one remedy, and that was to make the Guildhall the centre of the 119 square miles of Greater London, with the five or six millions of people within its jurisdiction. He wanted to see the City in its right place, representative of that City of London which Members on both sides of that House represented; and it was because he believed that the City could no longer stand without reform, and that this was the opportunity for it, that he should vote for the Amendment of his honourable and learned Friend.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University) said he thought a few words should be said on behalf of the City in reply to some of the statements made by honourable Members opposite. His honourable Friend the Member for Poplar left the Committee under the impression that the City made a large profit out of the markets. It was quite true that on the Foreign Cattle Market there was a profit, but on the other markets there was a loss.

MR. BUXTON said that the latest returns showed that, taking the last seven years, there was a profit on the markets of £50,000 a year.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK said he was informed that there was a loss on the markets as a whole. Probably his honourable Friend made no allowance for interest and sinking fund. His honourable Friend said that if the Tower Bridge had been built by the London County Council it might have been placed on a different site. He believed the general opinion in the City was that the most convenient site had been selected. The honourable Member for Battersea said that Epping Forest was bought by the City with other people's

money, but he should like to know who those other people were. Then the honourable Member proceeded to tell the Committee that the fire brigade and sewers in the City were kept up by the London County Council, but he omitted to mention the important fact that the City paid an eighth of the whole expenses of the fire brigade and the sewers. As regards the administration of the Shop Hours Act, the great bulk of the population left the City early, and there was no reason why the shops should be kept open late at night. Then, with reference to the Guildhall, even if the City were treated precisely like other districts, the Guildhall would still be required for City purposes. Every part of London had its own hall. So much for the reasons given for including the City. He had the honour of addressing the House on the Second Reading, and the reasons he then gave why the City should not be included had not been touched upon in the Debate except as regarded the points he had mentioned. Then he came to the question of the advantage it would be to the City to be included. The honourable Member for the Elland Division stated that there were not many contested elections in the City, and that the Common Council was improperly elected. It is quite true that there were not many contested elections in the City, because if a man stood well in the City it was useless for a stranger to oppose him. They took great care to get the best men, and when they got them they thought it wise to keep them. He entirely denied, however, that there was any indifference or apathy in the City in reference to municipal government. He believed there was no part of the metropolis which possessed more civic life than the City, and he was surprised that the honourable Member for Battersea should have made such sweeping statements without facts to support them. It was a remarkable circumstance that the honourable Gentlemen who attacked the City came from Scotland and the North of England. The bankers, the merchants, and the manufacturers of the City of London made no complaint of the present administration. He thought the Committee would agree that those engaged in mercantile affairs in the City were likely to know what was the best in their own interests than Gentlemen who came from the North.

MR. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said he was sure the Committee was very glad that someone had risen from the other side to defend the position of the City, and no one was better able to undertake that task than the right honourable Baronet. There were two concurrent groups of points urged in the Debate, one not germane to the Amendment, though the other was. The points which had not been answered by the right honourable Baronet were very distinctly germane to the question before the Committee, which was, how would the Amendment really affect the method of the internal government of the City? They were about to create certain boroughs in London with certain powers. They were going to alter the powers of the governing bodies, and the question raised by the Amendment was whether the City of London was to be submitted to that operation also. He would recall to the Committee some of the points which it was necessary to answer. For instance, they were going to alter in the other districts of London the action of the assessment committees in the interests of sound assessment. He had sat for years on the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, and he was convinced by the evidence that on the whole the assessment of the local districts of London was better carried out than the assessments of local districts in any other part of the country with one great exception—the City of London. The Report of the Commission showed that the assessment of the City of London was exceedingly badly conducted. It was largely under-assessed, and most irregularly assessed, and the result affected the receipts of the whole City of London. He therefore wished to know why the assessment of the City was not to be dealt with. The reason for its bad assessment was perfectly clear. It had 112 assessing bodies, 30 covering less than a couple of acres, and something like 20 having less than 30 inhabitants. How could the assessment be properly conducted under these circumstances? Why was not the City included in the Bill even in that respect. He assumed that the object of the form of words in the part of the Bill they were now considering was to exclude the City from that and other reforms, although the City needed the reforms which were to be conferred in the boroughs. There

was another reform he would mention. The City audit was extremely bad and absolutely insufficient, and no one would say it was satisfactory. The Government were about to improve the audit in the other districts, not as he would wish, but according to the best of their lights. That was provided for in clause 10, sub-section 2. Why should not London be brought up to the level of the other districts in that respect? Then, again, the borrowing powers of the London County Council were to be transferred to the Local Government Board. Why were not the borrowing powers of the City to be dealt with? It was not any advantage to the citizens of London that they should be able to borrow money without a sinking fund. The result was a stationary and unreduced debt—an evil which it would be well to get rid of. The City of London had also the right to sell its property without the leave of any supervising board. Other vestries in London had that right at present, but it was going to be taken away from them. Why was not that reform extended to the City, and why was not the method of rating proposed in the Bill to apply to the City? All these were matters in which it could not be contended that the position of the City was satisfactory. In fact, it was highly unsatisfactory. He should like to put a question to the Chair as to the effect of the Amendment. The words in the clause were—

“The whole administrative county of London, exclusive of the City of London.”

The Amendment was to substitute “inclusive” for “exclusive.” It was not the case, as had been frequently stated, that the City was not dealt with in the Bill. Clause 8 contained the words—

“This section shall apply as if the Common Council of the City of London were a council of a metropolitan borough.”

He wished to know whether if the Amendment were not carried they would be precluded thereby from moving the addition of words to other clauses similar to the words he had quoted from clause 8? For instance, clause 4 dealt with the appointment and duties of overseers and collectors of rates. Would it be open to them, if the Amend-

ment were now rejected, to move at the end of that clause the following words—

“This section shall apply as if the Common Council of the City of London were a metropolitan borough.”

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): I think we are entirely misconceiving the effect of this clause. As I conceive it, it only says that the whole of the administrative county of London, except the City, shall be organised in a certain specified manner, but that that organisation shall not apply to the City. The question dealt with in this clause is not the functions of the new boroughs, but their organisation, and the adoption of the Amendment would simply be to subject the City to the same organisation as the other boroughs, leaving undoubtedly the City with its present functions, which would constitute a question for subsequent consideration. We are now rather confusing the question of organisation with the question of the functions of the City and the other parts of London. We are now discussing the organisation; and the question of functions, which may separately arise, is not affected by it.

***THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES:**

It seems to me that the first three clauses deal with the establishment of metropolitan boroughs, and the effect of the words, “exclusive of the City of London,” being retained is simply that the machinery for the establishment of metropolitan boroughs throughout London is not to be applied to the City. I will not go any further than that. If any Amendments affecting the City of London arise at a future stage, I shall be prepared to deal with them when they are reached.

MR. ASQUITH: Do I understand you to rule, Sir, that if these words are retained it will still be competent to move at a later stage Amendments dealing with the existing powers and functions of the City?

***THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES:**

It is rather a point that I wish to avoid giving a decision on. Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. When we reach that stage I shall be prepared to deal with the matter.

MR. STUART said he would very briefly conclude the remarks which had elicited the Chairman's ruling. He again asked for a reply to the points he had raised, which were completely germane to the Amendment.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): The right honourable Baronet who represented the University of London rather neglected one point, namely, the principle involved in markets in other areas in the metropolis being left subject to the authority of the City. Surely the boroughs to be created by the Bill could not be boroughs in any accepted sense of the word if they had not control over the markets in their respective areas. He could not follow the right honourable Gentleman in charge of the Bill on the argument on which he maintained the words which the Amendment proposed to omit, namely, that they were not going to touch the central authority. He would point out to the right honourable Gentleman that he did touch the central authority when it happened to be the County Council, and that he only avoided touching the central authority as far as it was necessary for the protection of the City. The right honourable Baronet spoke of honourable Members attacking the City. He had no desire to do anything of the kind. He had spent 30 years of his life in the City, and the thousands who came from all parts of the world received a hearty welcome. He therefore would be very reluctant to make any attack on the City, but was it an indignity or an attack to improve the government of the City? In improving the municipal government of Islington and Poplar and the other districts, they did not mean that there was corruption and maladministration. They only said that the requirements of municipal life demanded an improvement in government. Why should not the same argument apply to the City? They were fixing the areas all over London, and why should this single area of the City be excluded? What subdivisions had they in the City? They had got 112 parishes there, and 28 wards, but the wards did not mean parishes, for they overlapped one another. The number of parishes was quite ridiculous, and there ought to be some recognition of the internal as well as the external area. If such matters were to be settled

all over the metropolis, why should the City be left untouched, and all these anomalies be allowed to remain as in the past. It would not deprive the City Corporation of any of its emoluments to simplify its areas in the manner in which the other areas throughout the rest of the metropolis were simplified. He would remind the House that the Irish Local Government Bill last year contained some 80 or 86 clauses when it was introduced, and when it was finished it contained 120 clauses, and the Government got the Bill through in a most amicable manner. Therefore, the present Bill might be made three times as big if they consulted the views of municipal reformers generally, and the Government would still get the Measure through quite easily. With regard to the authority in the City, let the House look at it separately for a moment. It consisted of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the City of London. Now, how was the Lord Mayor chosen? He must be selected from a very small circle of aldermen who had served in the office of sheriff. He believed that that office alone cost something like £6,000 or £7,000 a year. The mayor had a splendid carriage, and the sheriffs also had a carriage a little less splendid; but what they did besides acting as aides-de-camp to the Lord Mayor would puzzle anyone to say. He did not see why the Lord Mayor should be selected from such a limited few when there was such a variety to choose from. Why should they not have a great actor, a great author, an eminent lawyer, or some member of the aristocracy as Lord Mayor? That was a very important point which ought to be considered. With regard to the aldermen, they should not forget the anomalous position which they occupied in the City, where they had 24 instead of the number provided for in the Bill. He did not see why City aldermen should be elected for life, and made justices of the peace for life, because the aldermen under this Bill were only elected for six years, and were justices of the peace for only that period. He could not see any reason at all for the great distinction made between the City area and those areas outside. Why should there be 72 councillors for a large district like Islington, when for a small area like the City there were no less than 206 councillors carrying

on a sort of imitation of the proceedings of this House. With regard to the question of powers retained by the City, again they were face to face with certain anomalies in reference to assessment and other matters. Why should a single institution like the Bank of England be permitted to assess itself, for this was a general scandal. The Bank of England was the sole assessing authority for one parish, and it controlled two other parishes. The result was that the Bank of England fixed its assessment at £55,000 a year instead of £110,000. That was not the only example, because there were a few houses in Cornhill which constituted a parish in themselves and practically made their own assessment. Surely that was a scandal which ought not to be allowed, and it cannot be said that it adds to the honour and dignity of the City Corporation that such abuses should be allowed to continue. Those arguments had not been answered, and the progress of the Bill would not be facilitated by refusing to give them a fair reply to their criticisms. If they were not strong in the Division Lobby, surely they must be treated fairly in Debate. If such anomalies in the City could be justified, let them hear the justification. He denied that they were attacking the City of London, for he maintained that they were its best friends, and they were proceeding in accordance with good democratic principles which were embodied in the City Corporation centuries ago. They were now asking that those abuses should be cleared away, and that the Corporation, like the other boroughs, should be made fit for the great duties which it was asked to perform.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am very reluctant to trouble the House again, but the honourable Gentleman and other speakers opposite seem to think they have been treated with some discourtesy by the Government because speakers from this Bench have not gone into detail as to certain arguments honourable Gentlemen have brought forward. I can assure them they are entirely mistaken. The difference between us on the present occasion is this. The honourable Member for Islington and those who have preceded him have brought forward against the City of London a series of arguments

in dealing with matters which they say show a necessity for the reform of the Corporation and the present constitution of the City of London. The Government replied that these matters may or may not be of the importance which the honourable Gentlemen think they are; but, after all, the Bill is intended to deal with a smaller area of reform. The Government do not dogmatically assert that the City of London is incapable of reform; we do not assert that the matters referred to do not deserve the consideration of the House. We lay down no proposition whatever. We may express our own view, but we do not ask the Committee as a whole to accept it. All we do ask the Committee to do is to allow us to proceed with the reform of this metropolitan area, which is surely enough in itself to occupy the time of the House of Commons for one Session. That is a reasonable demand. The honourable Gentleman must not think that it is in any sense of discourtesy to him that I refuse to go into the details of City administration—such as the question of assessment—raised by the honourable Gentleman. If the House desires, in addition to reforming the enormous metropolitan area, to reform also the City of London—which is an entirely different and a more complicated problem—let it be done in a separate Bill; but I do think the Committee might be allowed to come to a decision, without any longer delay, on the simple issue before it. Honourable Gentlemen, at all events, must not suppose that we have the least desire at all to burke discussion.

MR. ASQUITH: The right honourable Gentleman brings in a Bill which purports to be a Local Government Bill dealing with the government of London; but he deliberately omits what many of us regard as the crux of the problem—namely, the City of London; and then the right honourable Gentleman takes his stand on the admitted incompleteness of his own proposal to deprecate what he calls the undue enlargement of the area of discussion. I demur to the proposition advanced by the right honourable Gentleman in an early part of the proceedings that the question involved in the Amendment was practically decided on the Second Reading of the Bill. The question which was

decided on the Second Reading, and which the Amendment does not reopen, was, whether the City central authority and the County Council should be fused into one body, and those dignified associations and ceremonial functions which at present cluster round the City should be in future associated with the proposed new body representing 120 square miles of London at large, as the Commission presided over by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Bodmin recommended. The question which the Amendment raises is whether the reform which the Bill proposes to introduce in the case of every local authority in London should be denied to the central district of the City, and surely it is one which is worthy of full discussion and the deliberate judgment of the Committee. The important point is this—that if the Amendment is rejected, it will be impossible, in debating the later clauses of the Bill, to introduce by way of amendment any reference to the internal administration of the City. [Hear, hear.] That proposition is assented to on the other side of the House, and is borne out by the statement of the right honourable Gentleman himself. There has been in many respects a large improvement within recent years in the administration of the domestic affairs of the City of London. But there still remains in the City a number of what I will not call anomalies, because the First Lord of the Treasury loves anomalies, being of the opinion that there is a sentimental attraction in an anomaly which has a certain amount of historical association, which gives them a sort of *primâ facie* title; but I will style them practical grievances, of a serious and substantial kind, which, if the Bill is passed, will not be possible in any of the other local areas of London. There is the system of personal assessment. A more ridiculous system of assessment than that which at present prevails in the City of London it is impossible to imagine. This vast number of infinitesimal authorities, sometimes representing districts of not more than one or two acres in extent, with only 20 or 30 inhabitants, and each having a separate assessment, cannot be defended upon grounds of practical convenience, and it is absolutely impossible that such a system can be continued. What can be more absurd than the manner in which

the chief magistrate of the City of London was elected, and the system of audit? All these things will be impossible in any of the local authorities proposed to be created by this Bill. The principal object of this Amendment is to leave it open at a future state of the Committee to introduce within the area of the City of London remedies for these admitted and substantial grievances, which would not be allowed to exist in any other area in the metropolis, but which, if this Bill is passed, will continue to exist in the City of London in a stereotyped form. It is upon that ground rather than with the desire or intention of reopening the larger question of the amalgamation of the City authority with the London County Council that I ask the Committee to accept the Amendment.

Mr. STEADMAN (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) said that personally he was a very young Member of the House, but he represented a London constituency, and he looked upon that Bill as one of the most important that had ever been introduced since the passing of County Councils Act in 1888. He was astonished to find that Members on the opposite side of the House had not had the courage to get up and support the Bill. The Leader of the House had stated that the Bill was quite large enough in its present form without dealing with the City, but he might just as well say that it was large enough without dealing with Mile End Old Town. [Ministerial interruptions.] He had not received a University education, but he thought that he could still teach some honourable Members opposite a lesson in manners. Now, what were the facts of the case? The Government had a majority of 140 behind them, and yet the Leader of the House actually got up and told both the House and the country that the Bill in its present form was quite large enough for one Session without including the City within its scope. A more lame excuse he never heard in his life. The City of London had two representatives in this House, and not one of them had had the courage to speak in support of the proposal of the Government in regard to the City. Why did they not get up and refute the charges brought against the City of corruption and maladministration?

SIR E. CLARKE: There has been no such charge.

MR. STEADMAN (continuing) said that one of the most important questions they had to deal with was the housing problem, and the City evaded their responsibilities under the Housing Act of 1894. The natural consequence had been that the landlords had taken advantage of the great demand for house accommodation, and rents had risen not 25 per cent. only in the East End, but in some cases they had gone up 75 per cent. The minimum rate levied in the City was 2s. 11½d. in the £, and maximum 3s. 0½d., whereas the poorest districts of London had to pay 7s. and 8s. in the £. Surely they had a right to ask that they should share in the profits derived from the City. The poor people who had to live on the cheap fish left over at the Billingsgate Market and the "cag-mag" and what were known as "block ornaments" from Smithfield Market, did not participate in the profits of those markets, because they were under the control of the City. The Leader of the House, in winding up the Debate on the Second Reading of this Bill, said that, although the City of London was not included, that fact did not prevent any other Government at any future time from dealing with the question. If the right honourable Gentleman meant anything by that he meant that whenever the Liberal Party came into power it would be for them to bring in a Bill dealing with the City of London. That was all very well, but why did he make that statement? Simply because he knew very well that if the Liberal Party carried such a Bill through this House, the House of Lords would prevent it from becoming law. The Measure was a badly constructed one, and he should have thought that, with all the machinery at their disposal, they would have been able to produce a Bill much more perfect in its character. He advised them to drop the Measure so far as this Session was concerned, and after the House had prorogued they would have more time to think the matter over, and then they might introduce a Measure more democratic in its character than the present Bill.

MR. MADDISON (Sheffield, Brightside) said that in the course of the Debate he had heard one or

two rather strange remarks. They had been twitted that those who supported the Amendment were only Scotchmen and Northcountrymen. He maintained, notwithstanding this charge, that it was quite possible for them to take some intelligent and active interest in the Government of London. He did not think it ought to be necessary to apologise in that House either for being a Scotchman or a Northcountryman when they intervened in a discussion of that sort. Some of them who had had provincial experience were able to look at the Measure with some close knowledge and perhaps a little more impartiality than the London Members. It did seem strange that the Government were resisting an Amendment which sought to extend the benefit of reform to the very place where it was needed most. No provincial town would entertain a proposal for municipal reform which left out that part which needed reforming the most. He had seen a great deal in vestrydom to excite much of his admiration, although it was a parochial sort of government which he thought could very well be improved.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: I would ask the honourable Member to confine his remarks to the question before the Committee. He is wandering away from the subject.

MR. MADDISON said he had no desire to wander, and he did not intend to go into detail with regard to the various questions which had been raised. The First Lord of the Treasury had in his speech practically admitted that, so far as he was concerned, he was not prepared to say that the City was an ideal municipality, and the instances given had made it quite clear that anomalies did exist. There were grievances in the City at the present time which would not be tolerated in any other municipality in the kingdom, and the talk about the Amendment being an attack upon the City appeared to him to be very wide of the mark. There could only be one result of that Debate, and it would be that they would be very badly beaten in the Division Lobby; but another equally certain result would be that the country would see that the desire put forward by the Government to reform the City was not a thorough and real

cne, because they had refused to admit an Amendment which they might have accepted even without traversing their major proposition, the object of which was to secure the absolute unity of London as a whole.

Question put—

“That the word ‘exclusive’ stand part of the Clause.”

The Committee divided:—Ayes 208; Noes 103.—(Division List No. 95.)

AYES.

Allhusen, Augustus H. E.
 Arnold, Alfred
 Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
 Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
 Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
 Bailey, James (Walworth)
 Balcarres, Lord
 Balfour, Rt.HnA.J. (Manch'r)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
 Banbury, Frederick George
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell
 Barry, Rt.HnA.H. Smith (Hunts)
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Barton, Dunbar Plunket
 Bathurst, Hon. A. Benjamin
 Beach, Rt.HnSirM.H. (Bristol)
 Beckett, Ernest William
 Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
 Bethell, Commander
 Bhowaggee, Sir M. M.
 Bigwood, James
 Bill, Charles
 Blundell, Colonel Henry
 Bond, Edward
 Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
 Boulnois, Edmund
 Bousfield, William Robert
 Brassey, Albert
 Brodrick, Rt. Hn. St. John
 Burdett-Coutts, W.
 Butcher, John George
 Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
 Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, East)
 Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
 Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
 Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r)
 Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Charrington, Spencer
 Chelsea, Viscount
 Clare, Octavius Leigh
 Clarke, Sir Edwd. (Plymouth)
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Cochrane, Hn. Thos. H. A. E.
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Compton, Lord Alwyne
 Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
 Cornwallis, Fiennes Stanley W.
 Cox, Irwin Edward B. (Harrow)
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
 Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton)
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalbiac, Colonel Philip Hugh
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
 Dorington, Sir John Edward
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers-
 Drage, Geoffrey
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.

Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
 Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manch'r)
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
 Firbank, Joseph Thomas
 Fisher, William Haves
 Fitz-Gerald, Sir Robt. Penrose-
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Forster, Henry William
 Fry, Lewis
 Galloway, William Johnson
 Garfit, William
 Gedge, Sydney
 Gibbs, Hn.A. G. H. (City of Lond.)
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Gilliat, John Saunders
 Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
 Goldsaworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hon. John Edward
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
 Goschen, Rt.HnG.J. (St George's)
 Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
 Goulding, Edward Alfred
 Graham, Henry Robert
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Green, Walford D. (Wednesbury)
 Greene, W. Raymond (Cambs.)
 Gretton, John
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Hall, Rt. Hn. Sir Charles
 Halsey, Thomas Frederick
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord George
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hardy, Laurence
 Henderson, Alexander
 Hoare, Edw. Brodie (Hampstead)
 Holland, Hn. Lionel R. (Bow)
 Howard, Joseph
 Howell, William Tudor
 Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
 Jackson, Rt. Hn. Wm. Lawies
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
 Kemp, George
 Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
 Kimber, Henry
 Knowles, Lees
 Lafone, Alfred
 Lawrence, Sir E. Durning (Corn)
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
 Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
 Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Long, Rt.HnWalter (Liverpool)
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lowles, John
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Lubbock, Rt. Hn. Sir John
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred

Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdona, John Cumming
 Maclure, Sir John William
 McCalmont, H. L. B. (Cambs.)
 Maple, Sir John Blundell
 Marks, Harry H.
 Martin, Richard Biddulph
 Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.
 Melville, Beresford Valentine
 Middlemore, John Throgmorton
 Milward, Colonel Victor
 Monckton, Edward Philip
 Monk, Charles James
 Montagu, Hn. J. Scott (Hants.)
 Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
 Morgan, Hn. Fred. (Monm'thsh.)
 Morrell, George Herbert
 Morrison, Walter
 Morton, Arthur H. A. (Deptford)
 Mount, William George
 Muntz, Philip A.
 Murray, Rt.HnA. Graham (Bute)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Myers, William Henry
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford.
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
 Penn, John
 Percy, Earl
 Pilkington, Richard
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
 Purvis, Robert
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Richards, Henry Charles
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Robinson, Brooke
 Rothschild, Hon. Lionel Walter
 Round, James
 Roys, Clement Molyneux
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Cheltenham)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Rutherford, John
 Ryder, John Herbert Dudley
 Sands, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
 Savory, Sir Joseph
 Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
 Skewes-Cox, Thomas
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stewart, Sir Mark J. M. Taggart
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir J. M.
 Stock, James Henry
 Strauss, Arthur
 Strutt, Hon. Charles Hedley
 Sturt, Hon. Humphrey Napier

Sutherland, Sir Thomas
Talbot, Rt.Hn.J. G. (Oxf'd Univ)
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Valentia, Viscount
Wanklyn, James Lealie
Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of Wight)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon

Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
Williams, Joseph Powell (Birm.)
Wilson, John (Falkirk)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wodehouse, Rt.Hn.E.R. (Bath)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt.Hn.C.B. Stuart-
Wylie, Alexander

Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
Young, Commander (Berks, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Sir William Walrond and
Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Allen, Wm (Newc.-under-Lyme)
Allison, Robert Andrew
Asher, Alexander
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt.Hn.Herbert Henry
Baker, Sir John
Balfour, Rt.Hn.J. Blair (Clackm.)
Barlow, John Emmott
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
Billson, Alfred
Birrell, Augustine
Broadhurst, Henry
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, John
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Channing, Francis Allston
Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh)
Courtney, Rt. Hn. Leonard H.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dunn, Sir William
Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Gladstone, Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gold, Charles
Grey, Sir Edward (Berwick)
Griffith, Ellis J.

Hazell, Walter
Hedderwick, Thos. Charles H.
Holden, Sir Angus
Holland, Wm. H. (York, W.R.)
Horniman, Frederick John
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Jones, William (Carnarvonsh.)
Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt.Hn.Sir U.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Labouchere, Henry
Lambert, George
Langley, Batty
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accringtn)
Leng, Sir John
Leuty, Thomas Richmond
Lyell, Sir Leonard
Macaleese, Daniel
McArthur, William (Cornwall)
McGhee, Richard
McKenna, Reginald
Maddison, Fred.
Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morgan, W. Pritchard (Merthyr)
Morley, Charles (Breckonshire)
Morton, Edw. J. C. (Devonport)
Moulton, John Fletcher
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
Oldroyd, Mark
Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Power, Patrick Joseph
Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
Rickett, J. Compton

Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighsh.)
Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
Scott, Chas. Prestwich (Leigh)
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Soames, Arthur Wellealey
Spicer, Albert
Steadman, William Charles
Stevenson, Francis S.
Strachey, Edward
Stuart, James (Shoreditch)
Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, Alfred (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr)
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Wallace, Robert (Perth)
Walton, John Lawson (Leeds, S.)
Walton, Joseph (Barnslev)
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wedderburn, Sir William
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams, John Carvell (Notts)
Wilson, Frederick W. (Norfolk)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, John (Govan)
Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Huddersf'd)
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Mr. Haldane and Mr. Lough.

Committee report Progress; to sit
again To-morrow.

Progress was then reported.

REPORT OF SUPPLY.

SUPPLY [21st APRIL].

Resolutions reported—

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1899-1900.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding
£1,211,900, be granted to Her Majesty,
to defray the Charge for the Staff for
Engineer Services, and Expenditure for

Royal Engineer Works, Buildings, and
Repairs, at Home and Abroad (including
Purchases), which will come in course
of payment during the year ending on
the 31st day of March 1900."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding
£3,425,500, be granted to Her Majesty,
to defray the Charge for Provisions,
Forage, and other Supplies, which will
come in course of payment during the
year ending on the 31st day of March
1900."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding
£1,090,000, be granted to Her Majesty,
to defray the Charge for Clothing Estab-
lishments and Services, which will come
in course of payment during the year
ending on the 31st day of March 1900."

4. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,531,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Supply and Repair of Warlike and other Stores, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1900."

Resolutions read a second time.

Amendment proposed to the First Resolution—

"To leave out '£1,211,900,' and insert '£1,191,900,' instead thereof."—(*Mr. Dillon.*)

MR. DILLON said he desired to move the reduction of this Vote by £20,000 in respect of the sum which was asked for to complete the accommodation for the increased garrison in South Africa. The subject was raised on Friday last and Debated for some time in Committee, but no satisfactory explanation was given as to the cause of the increased garrison or whether it was intended to be a permanent increase. No satisfactory explanation had been given as to the locality in which the money was to be spent. The sum of £129,600 had already been voted, and £22,400 was now asked for to complete that sum. He felt it his duty to take this opportunity of protesting against this Vote, because it appeared to him that the House of Commons was called upon to acquiesce in an immense permanent increase in the military garrison in South Africa. Why was so large an increase required? It appeared to him that the policy of increasing their garrison from 3,000 to upwards of 9,000 men, at which figure it stood at the present moment, was a policy calculated to create and maintain irritation in that country, and to increase the likelihood of disturbance and, possibly, of war. It was to him a great question of principle, which the House should not agree to without protest. The sum of £129,600 had already been voted, and they were now called upon to vote £22,400 as a further sum. That made a total of £152,000, and yet the total estimated cost of the works was only £150,200. Under the circumstances why were they asked to vote £152,000? It seemed to him that the Estimates were prepared in a slipshod fashion, and he should like some explanation from the Colonial Secretary.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: The honourable Member has raised some question of detail in this Estimate, and he has also raised a question of principle to which I may be permitted to reply. He asks where this expenditure is to take place? This money is for the establishment of appropriate accommodation for the troops for the different garrisons in South Africa. Assuming that the principle accepted by the House that it is desirable to increase the garrison in South Africa, I think there will be no difficulty whatever in inducing the House to provide proper accommodation for the troops in such a way that their health and comfort may be secured without erecting more permanent buildings than at present exist. So far as the detail of the objection is concerned, I do not think the honourable Member attaches much weight to it. As far as the principle of the honourable Member's objection is concerned, I hardly think I am entitled to consider the honourable Member as a representative of the interests of the United Kingdom. I do not think the honourable Member will accept such a character, for he and one or two other Members from Ireland, unfortunately, in the case of any possible difficulties which may occur between this country and any foreign country, and even barbarous chiefs, were inclined to accept the position of advocate of the foreign country or the barbarous chiefs rather than of the United Kingdom. The honourable Member asked why it was necessary to increase the permanent garrison in South Africa, which, as he correctly states, was some few years ago between 3,000 and 4,000 men. I hope that upon this point I shall give an answer which will be satisfactory to the majority of the House. It was part of the general principle on which Her Majesty's Government thought it to be their duty to defend the possessions of Her Majesty against possible attacks. Those steps are regulated by the proceedings of other countries. If any other country should feel it necessary to increase its navy, we increased our Navy in proportion, on purely defensive principles and on the assumption that we are bound to maintain a certain proportion between the forces of this country and those of other countries. Fortunately that concludes Her Majesty's obligations with regard to

most of her possessions, as they are of an insular character and could be defended by the Navy. In the case of Africa, where we had a land frontier, the same principle obtains with regard to the land forces, and if our neighbours increase their military preparations we are bound also to increase ours. Let me take an illustration. It is only an illustration, because, fortunately, the hypothesis has not arisen and is not likely to arise. For instance, suppose the French Government, in the exercise of its discretion, thought it necessary to send large forces to Dahomey, we might think it necessary to increase our forces at Lagos. The Transvaal Republic, which borders both on the Colony of Natal and Cape Colony, has enormously increased their offensive or defensive forces within the last few years. It is within the knowledge of every Member of the House that they have spent enormous sums in forts, artillery, and rifles, and millions of cartridges have been imported. In these circumstances, what we considered a sufficient defensive force in previous years has become totally insufficient now under the altered circumstances. That is the sole reason—it is a necessity imposed upon us, and one which I think the House will recognise—for the increase of the garrison, and it is an increase which the Government must insist upon so long as they have the responsibility for the peace of South Africa.

*MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) congratulated the right honourable Gentleman upon the fact that he had been able to make the assertion with a grave face that the precautions taken by the Transvaal Government had been taken possibly with a view of invading British territory. The right honourable Gentleman appeared to have forgotten the fact that a raid had been made by English troops on the Transvaal, and in consequence the greatest antagonism was excited. The right honourable Gentleman appeared to harbour the idea of forcing a conflict with the Transvaal with the view of annexing that country. He did not think that anyone in that House believed that there was the slightest intention on the part of the Transvaal Government to make any raid into English territory. Under the guidance of

Secretary of State for the Colonies.

the right honourable Gentleman they were constantly nagging at President Kruger and interfering with the internal relations of the Transvaal, with which they had nothing to do, for the Transvaal was as independent of England in its internal relations as Russia was so far as international rights were concerned.

MR. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.) thought the speech just delivered by the Secretary for the Colonies was very different both in substance, tone, and temper from that which was delivered by the First Lord of the Treasury on the same subject last Friday, when it was stated that their forces in South Africa were mainly for the purpose of defending their coaling stations. The military forces in South Africa were continuously increasing, and had done ever since the right honourable Gentleman accepted the office of Colonial Secretary. If this country was going to engage in a competition with the military strength of other great Powers, either in Africa or elsewhere, he thought that was a very serious prospect for this country.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said the Colonial Secretary had followed up defiant action by a defiant speech. It was perfectly true that the Transvaal only had recourse to defensive measures after a most scandalous and outrageous raid had been made upon their country. He did not suppose that the right honourable Gentleman himself would ever dream that President Kruger, if not attacked, would think of marching on Cape Colony or Natal. When the Treaty between England and the Transvaal was signed, Lord Stanley, who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs, wrote a letter to the negotiators, in which he said that we must prevent the Transvaal Government from making treaties with Foreign Powers without our consent, but in everything else England had nothing to do with the Transvaal. Now the right honourable Gentleman had laid it down as a sort of law that wherever a country whose frontier marched with that of England increased its army there we should send a similar number of troops and do the same thing. They knew that the Russians were going to increase their army in Manchuria. Did the right

honourable Gentleman propose to increase our army in China and make it equal to that of the Russians in Manchuria? That declaration of policy on the part of the right honourable Gentleman, if carried out, would be perfectly ruinous to this country. Why should those troops in South Africa be maintained at the cost of the British taxpayer? They did not do this sort of thing in Canada, and why should they make this distinction in Cape Colony? The Secretary for the Colonies had threatened that if President Kruger increased his defensive power he would increase the garrison in South Africa. He was sorry that the Leader of the Opposition was not in his place, for if he had been he felt perfectly sure that he would have renewed his vote against this attempt to establish a permanent garrison in South Africa. He did not think that they should be called upon to maintain such an army in a self-governing Colony, and he thought the Members on the Opposition side were bound to follow his honourable Friend into the Lobby.

MR. BROADHURST said he did not often intervene in that class of business, but the speech of the Colonial Secretary was of such an alarming character that he thought the Debate ought to be adjourned until some more responsible persons on this side of the House were present to deal with it. The right honourable Gentleman had practically stated that they should put man for man whatever France or any other Power having possessions in Africa thought proper to place in that country. Supposing Germany or France sent 150,000 men, where was this country going to find that number? He never heard anything more alarming, and a reduction in their expenditure was perfectly hopeless if that sort of thing went on. The Government of the Transvaal would be wanting in their public duty if they did not take steps to defend themselves against invasion, especially bearing in mind the buccaneering raid made into their territory not long ago, which had never been reprimanded properly by the Government of this country. There was

no justification whatever for Great Britain to keep such a large Army in South Africa, and he should go into the Division Lobby against this Vote.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) contended that the sites for the military buildings in South Africa, viewed either from a sanitary or a military standpoint, were the worst that could possibly be conceived. Now, what had the Transvaal Government done in the direction of defending their country? They had put additional forts in Pretoria and Johannesburg, where there was a very turbulent population. They had also, in consequence of the last raid made by British troops into their country, imported new rifles and a certain amount of ammunition. England raided their country in 1848 and in 1871, and in 1896 there was another semi-official raid. Upon each occasion the Boers were unprotected and unprepared, and how could they be blamed now for taking steps to protect their country against any future invasion. As to the sites for the military buildings, there were plenty of splendid plateaux in South Africa, from 2,000 to 4,000 feet high, where the troops could live free from disease, and under conditions that would be in every way satisfactory. He supposed that it was no use saying anything more about this policy, for they were going to pay that money and place an extra burden upon the country because it pleased the right honourable Gentleman to carry on this policy of irritation which he had pursued almost from the time when he came into office. Had he adopted, instead of this policy, a more friendly attitude, he believed that all the questions at issue between the Transvaal and this country could have been settled. England had never yet undone the wrong which was done by the raid of 1873, for they had never yet given back to the Boers the rights which were then taken away from them. They heard on Friday night last from the First Lord of the Treasury that this was simply a policy of defending their coaling stations, but now they had received practically the real reason from the Colonial Secretary. There had

been a suggestion made that the Boers in Cape Colony required watching as much as the Boers in the Transvaal; but that had been repudiated, for the Colonial Secretary had now told them why their forces in South Africa had been nearly trebled. England had not treated the Boers like the other countries of Europe had, for it was far more to our own interests to have them friendly than otherwise, and when the position we have taken up with regard to the Transvaal comes to be written it will not look very well for Great Britain on the pages of history.

Mr. LEUTY (Leeds, E.) said he would not have troubled the House at such a late hour, but he thought it was manifest that they had been detained because of a very important declaration of policy which had been made by the Colonial Secretary at a very inopportune time. They had been told upon a previous

occasion that it was necessary for this country to have a Fleet as strong as any two other nations, and now it had been suggested that the same principle should be extended to the Army. That was an astounding extension of policy, and if pursued to its logical conclusion meant that wherever we found the army of a foreign nation close to our own territory we must have an army there of equal number. Such a policy could only be justified by a feeling that this country was in a tottering condition, and that very heroic measures were necessary to save it from absolute ruin. Surely if that was not the motive it must be Jingoism gone absolutely mad.

Question put—

“That £1,211,900 stand part of the Resolution.”

The House divided:—Ayes 103;
Noes 22.—(Division List No. 96.)

AYES.

Allhusen, Augustus Henry Eden
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Balcarras, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Rt. Hon. Gerald W. (Leeds)
Banbury, Frederick George
Barry, Rt. Hon. A. H. Smith- (Hunts)
Barton, Dunbar Plunket
Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Beckett, Ernest William
Bethell, Commander
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Butcher, John George
Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, East)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (Birm.)
Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Charrington, Spencer
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Cox, Irwin Edward B. (Harrow)
Curzon, Viscount
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne

Firbank, Joseph Thomas
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose-
Gedge, Sydney
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Goldsworth, Major-General
Gordon, Hon. John Edward
Goschen, Rt. Hon. G. J. (St. George's)
Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
Gretton, John
Gull, Sir Cameron
Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord George
Hanson, Sir Reginald
Henderson, Alexander
Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
Jessel, Captain Herbert Merton
Kimber, Henry
Lafone, Alfred
Lawrence, Sir E. Durning- (Corn)
Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Rt. Hon. Walter (Liverpool)
Macartney, W. G. Ellison
Macdonald, John Cumming
Maclure, Sir John William
McCalmont, H. L. B. (Cambs.)
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Milward, Colonel Victor
Montagu, Hon. J. Scott (Hants)
Morgan, Hn. Fred. (Monm'tsh)
Morrell, George Herbert
Murray, Rt. Hon. A. Graham (Bute)

Myers, William Henry
Nicholson, William Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford
Penn, John
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. Thomson
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Robinson, Brooke
Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
Ryder, John Herbert Dudley
Savory, Sir Joseph
Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
Seely, Charles Hilton
Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
Valentia, Viscount
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of Wight)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Joseph Powell (Birm.)
Wilson, John (Falkirk)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wylie, Alexander
Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
Young, Commander (Berks, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Sir William Walrond and
Mr. Anstruther.

Dr. Clark.

NOES.

Asher, Alexander
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Burns, John
 Caldwell, James
 Channing, Francis Allston
 Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Labouchere, Henry
 Lambert, George

Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Macaleese, Daniel
 M'Ghee, Richard
 Maddison, Fred.
 Oldroyd, Mark
 Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
 Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
 Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
 Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)

Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
 Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Williams, John Carvell (Notts)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Dillon and Mr.
 Buchanan.

*MR. BRYN ROBERTS asked why the Volunteer battalion of the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers was not permitted to wear the flash, which consisted of a piece of flat silk which was sewn below the collar at the back, which was a survival of the old time when soldiers wore pig-tails? The 23rd Regiment was the only one that retained the flash, but although the Militia as well as the Line battalions wore it, it was not permitted to the officers of the Volunteer battalions of the regiment. He thought they should be permitted to wear that distinction. Of course, he did not expect an answer straight off, because it was a matter which he had sprung upon the House, but he hoped that the honourable Gentleman opposite would take the matter into his consideration.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. J. POWELL WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.) promised to make inquiries into the subject and to give the honourable Member the most favourable answer which he could. He could not, for the moment, say how favourable that answer might be.

Resolution agreed to.

Remaining Resolutions agreed to.

ANCHORS AND CHAIN CABLES BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time this day.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES (NOTIFICATION) ACT (1889) EXTENSION BILL.

Considered in Committee and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

BUSINESS DEFERRED.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [9th March] further adjourned till Thursday.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Committee deferred till Thursday.

SUPPLY.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

COLONIAL LOANS FUND BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tomorrow.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

TELEGRAPHS (TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION, Etc.) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

INEBRIATES ACT (1898) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

IMPROVEMENT OF LAND BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

CHARITABLE LOANS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

PALATINE COURT OF DURHAM BILL
[H.L.]

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

SOLICITORS BILL [H.L.]

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING (CLAUSES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

METROPOLITAN STREETS ACT (1867)
AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

FARNLEY TYAS MARRIAGES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

TELEGRAPH (CHANNEL ISLANDS) BILL
[H.L.]

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

TEINDS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday 15th May.

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL BILL.

Second reading deferred till Tuesday 9th May.

CROWN CASES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday 9th May.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND)
BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday 15th May.

UNIVERSITY DEGREES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

TANCRED'S CHARITIES SCHEME
CONFIRMATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

INCEST (PUNISHMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday 15th May.

CONSTRUCTIVE MURDER LAW
AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday 15th May.

LIMITATIONS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

PARLIAMENTARY DEPOSITS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

CORONERS' INQUESTS (RAILWAY
FATALITIES) BILL.

* Second Reading deferred till this day.

House adjourned at fifty-five minutes
after Twelve of the clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 25th April 1899.

The LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat on the Woolsack at Four of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

RENFREW BURGH AND HARBOUR
EXTENSION BILL [H.L.]

A witness ordered to attend the Select Committee.

BROOKE'S PARK (LONDONDERRY).

The Order made on Friday last referring the petition for a Private Bill to Judges in Ireland, discharged: The said petition of Sir Edward Reid, William Tillie, John Cooke, and John Fitzpatrick Cooke, the trustees of the will of the late James Hood Brooke, praying for leave to introduce a Bill "for conferring powers upon the trustees of the will of the late James Hood Brooke to acquire Gwyn's Grounds, Londonderry, and lay out the same as a public park; and for other purposes"; together with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed thereto; read, and referred to the examiners.

GAINSBOROUGH URBAN DISTRICT
COUNCIL (GAS) BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, no parties having appeared in opposition thereto; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on the 27th of February and on Thursday last discharged; and Bill committed.

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[FOURTH SERIES.]

GROSVENOR CHAPEL (LONDON) BILL
[H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, no parties having appeared in opposition thereto; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on the 27th of February and Thursday last discharged; and Bill committed.

IMPERIAL MARKETS AND STORES BILL
[H.L.]

The Bill not having been read a Second Time within the time limited by Standing Order No. 91: Ordered that the Bill be not further proceeded with.

BUENOS AYRES AND PACIFIC RAIL-
WAY COMPANY BILL [H.L.]

Committed.

WATERMEN'S AND LIGHTER MEN'S
ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.]

Committed: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

BURY CORPORATION BILL [H.L.]

Committee to meet on Thursday next.

COBHAM GAS BILL [H.L.]

Committee to meet on Thursday next.

INFANT ORPHAN ASYLUM BILL [H.L.]

Committee to meet on Tuesday next.

STOCKTON AND MIDDLESBROUGH
WATER BILL [H.L.]

Committee to meet on Tuesday next.

BARRY RAILWAY BILL.

Read a second time, and committed: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

CARDIFF RAILWAY BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

U

DUBLIN IMPROVEMENT (BULL ALLEY AREA) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

HORSFORTH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL (WATER) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY (NEW RAILWAYS) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY (VARIOUS POWERS) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed:
The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

RHONDDA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL BILL.

Read a second time, and committed:
The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

ST. JAMES'S AND PALL MALL ELECTRIC LIGHT BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

TENTERDEN RAILWAY BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

WETHERBY DISTRICT WATER BILL.

Read a second time, and committed:
The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

KEW BRIDGE BILL [H.L.]

Read a third time, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

NORFOLK ESTUARY BILL [H.L.]

Read a third time, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Manchester Corporation Tramways Bill [H.L.]**Moss Side Urban District Council (Tramways) Bill [H.L.]****Oldham Corporation Bill [H.L.]****Salford Corporation Bill [H.L.]****Stretford Urban District Council (Tramways) Bill [H.L.]****Withington Urban District Council (Tramways) Bill [H.L.]****Sunderland Corporation Bill [H.L.]****Wakefield Corporation Bill [H.L.]****Furness Railway Bill [H.L.]**

Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills—

E. Lauderdale (chairman), L. Boyle (E. Cork and Orrery), L. Digby, L. Napier, L. Glanusk.

Agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Tuesday next, at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

CHARING CROSS, EUSTON, AND HAMPSTEAD RAILWAY BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read a first time; and referred to the Examiners.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (WELSH DIVISION).**

General Report for the year 1898, by A. G. Legard, Esq., Chief Inspector; with Appendices.

COMMERCIAL, NO. 2. (1899).

Papers relating to the arbitration in the case of Mr. Alderman Ben Tillet.

NATIONAL GALLERY, ETC. (SCOTLAND).

Fifth Annual Report to the secretary for Scotland by the Commissioners and Trustees of the Board of Manufactures in Scotland, for the year ended 30th September 1898.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

ARMY (VOLUNTEERS).

Proposed Amendment of the scheme relative to the efficiency of volunteers under Her Majesty's Order in Council dated 31st July 1880, as amended by subsequent Orders. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act) and ordered to lie on the Table.

PETITIONS.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (BOROUGH FUNDS) ACT, 1872.

Petition for amendment of; of the Chairman, Councillors, and Ratepayers of the Urban District of Itchen; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

VACCINATION ACT, 1898.

Petition for repeal of; of the Guardians of Honiton Union; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

MONEY-LENDING BILL [H.L.]

Petition for amendment of; of Institute of Money-Lenders; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.
PARISH CHURCHES (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Standing Committee with further amendments. The Report of the amendments made in Committee of the Whole House and by the Standing Committee to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 54.)

BODIES CORPORATE (JOINT TENANCY) BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Standing Committee without amendment, and to be read a third time on Thursday next.

LUNACY BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Standing Committee with a further amendment. The Report of the amendments made in Committee of the Whole House and by the Standing Committee to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 55.)

LAND CHARGES BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Standing Committee without amendment, and to be read a third time on Thursday next.

TROUT FISHING ANNUAL CLOSE TIME (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.]

House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

COPYRIGHT BILL [H.L.]

The following Lords were named of the Select Committee:—L. Chancellor, E. Dudley, E. Selborne, V. Knutsford, L. Hatherton, L. Monkswell, L. Hobhouse, L. Thring, L. Welby, L. Pirbright.

The Committee to meet on Monday next, at Three o'clock, and to appoint their own chairman.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE (NOTIFICATION) ACT (1889) EXTENSION BILL.

Read a first time; and to be printed. (No. 56.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 1) BILL.

Read a first time; and to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 57.)

House adjourned at thirty-five minutes after Four of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 25th April 1899.

MR. SPEAKER took the Chair at Three of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

NORTH WEST LONDON RAILWAY BILL
(QUEEN'S CONSENT SIGNIFIED).

Read the third time, and passed.

RUSHDEN AND HIGHAM FERRERS DISTRICT GAS BILL [H.L.]

Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

GAS LIGHT AND COKE COMPANY BILL
(BY ORDER).

Third Reading deferred till Thursday.

BRIGG URBAN DISTRICT GAS BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

LOWESTOFT PROMENADE PIER BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

METROPOLITAN WATER COMPANIES BILL.

Order [21st March] that the Metropolitan Water Companies Bill be committed, read, and discharged:—Bill withdrawn.—(*Dr. Farquharson.*)

WALLASEY TRAMWAYS AND IMPROVEMENTS BILL [H.L.]

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F).

Mr. Hargreaves Brown reported from the Committee on Group F of Private Bills, That the parties opposing the London Improvements Bill had stated that the evidence of Robert Vigers, 6, Frederick's Place, Old Jewry, E.C., was essential to their case; and it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Robert Vigers do attend the said Committee To-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Ordered, That Robert Vigers do attend the Committee on Group F, Private Bills, To-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP H).

Mr. Johnson-Ferguson reported from the Committee on Group H of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of Members, the Committee had adjourned till Thursday next, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

SUPREME COURT (APPEALS) BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday, and to be printed. (Bill 166.)

HULL, BARNSELEY, AND WEST RIDING JUNCTION RAILWAY AND DOCK BILL [H.L.].

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

SOUTH EASTERN AND LONDON, CHATHAM, AND DOVER RAILWAY COMPANIES BILL.

Reported from the Select Committee.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Minutes of Proceedings to be printed. (No. 171.)

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Committee—

1. "That, in the case of the West Middlesex Water Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:— That the parties be permitted to introduce their additional Provision, if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

2. "That, in the case of the London United Tramways Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:— That the parties be permitted to introduce their additional Provision, if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

Resolutions agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Hull, Barnsley, and West Riding Junction Railway and Dock Company to abandon certain of their authorised works, and to confer further powers upon that Company; and for other purposes." (Hull, Barnsley, and West Riding Junction Railway and Dock Bill (H.L.))

PETITIONS.

BOROUGH FUNDS ACT, 1872.

Petitions for alteration of Law;— From Rawmarsh; — Ithen; — and, Barry; to lie upon the Table.

ECCLESIASTICAL ASSESSMENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition of the Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (CODE OF REGULATIONS FOR DAY SCHOOLS).

Petition from Worcester, against proposed alterations to Articles 33, 37, and 42; to lie upon the Table.

EXECUTORS (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition of the Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

FINE OR IMPRISONMENT (SCOTLAND AND IRELAND) BILL.

Petition of the Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND RENTS (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Petitions in favour,—From Ashton under Lyne; — Mossley; — Cardiff; — Sunderland; — Rawmarsh; — and, St. Pancras; to lie upon the Table.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE (NOTIFICATION) ACT (1889) EXTENSION BILL.

Petition from Gainsborough, against; to lie upon the Table.

JUSTICES' DISQUALIFICATION REPEAL (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition of the Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Inverness (two); — Glasgow; — Brechin; — Bowmore; — Leith; — Dunfermline; — Scottish Temperance Association; — Aberdeen; — Kirkcaldy; — Alloa; — Overton; — Perth; — Comrie; — Irvine; — Broughton; — Carnoustie; — Dunragit; — Kincardineshire; — Ceres; — Leuchars; — and, Edinburgh; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SERVANTS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Petition from Dewsbury, against; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SERVANTS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Norwich;—Clare;—and, Sandown; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Nunnery Colliery;—Alfreton;—Ryland's Main;—Blackwell;—Chickenly Heath;—Bately;—North Staveley;—Aldwarke;—Heckmondwike;—Denby;—Woodside;—New Oaks;—Chesterfield;—Alma;—Grassmoor;—Millbridge;—Hornthorpes;—Dronfield;—Dunston;—Barlborough;—East Gawber;—Greasborough;—Ormiston;—Oxenford;—Micklefield;—Beeston;—Strafford;—Preston Grange;—Tranent;—Elphinstone;—Panstone;—Northfield;—Heage;—Victoria Colliery;—Home Rule Lodge;—Bond's Main;—and, Woodthorpe; to lie upon the Table.

PALATINE COURT OF DURHAM BILL.

Petition of the Incorporated Law Society, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

PARISH COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Dundee, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.

Petition from Leeds, for extension to women; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, against; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petition from Newcastle upon Tyne, against; to lie upon the Table.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From St. Blazey;—Stockport;—Bristol;—Lewes;—Walsall;—Bath;—Swindon;—Tondur;—Llantrissant;—Cheltenham;—Stroud;—Barry;—Accrington;—Chesterfield;—Ramsbottom;—Morpeth;—Tadmorden;—Crewe;—Aintree;—Skipton;—Rugby;—Wellingborough;—Wellington;—and, Colwick; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment;—From Dunfermline;—Edinburgh;—Rothsay;—and, Oban; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Puddletown;—Nacton;—Oveston;—Rochdale;—and, Southlands; to lie upon the Table.

SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition of the Scottish Trade Protection Society, against; to lie upon the Table.

TEMPERANCE REFORM (THREEFOLD OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Ellon;—Kintyre;—Glasgow;—General Assembly of the Church of Scotland;—and, Edinburgh; to lie upon the Table.

VIVISECTION.

Petition from Bayswater, for prohibition; to lie upon the Table.

WORKMEN'S HOUSES TENURE BILL.

Petition of the Scottish Trade Protection Society, against; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ARMY (VOLUNTEERS).

Copy presented,—of proposed Amendment of the Scheme relative to the efficiency of the Volunteers in force under Her Majesty's Orders in Council, dated 31st July 1880, 14th April 1884, etc. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL GALLERY, ETC. (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented,—of Fifth Annual Report to the Secretary for Scotland by the Commissioners and Trustees of the Board of Manufactures in Scotland, being for the year ending 30th September 1898 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ARBITRATION IN THE CASE OF MR. ALDERMAN BEN TILLET (COMMERCIAL, No. 2, 1899).

Copy presented,—of Papers relating to the Arbitration in the case of Mr. Alderman Ben Tillett [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (GENERAL REPORTS).

Copy presented,—of General Report to the Education Department by the Chief Inspector of the Welsh Division for the year 1898 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS.

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the Proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill."—*(Mr. Ritchie.)*

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 164.)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS.

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the Proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill."—*(Mr. Ritchie.)*

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 165.)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS.

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the Proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill."—*(Mr. Ritchie.)*

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 166.)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS.

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the Proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill."—*(Mr. Ritchie.)*

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 167.)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS.

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the Proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill."—*(Mr. Ritchie.)*

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 168.)

NEW BILL.

TRUCK ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 3) BILL.

"To amend the Truck Acts," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. (Bill 167.)

QUESTIONS.

STATUE OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): On this, the 300th anniversary of his birth, and honouring the memory of the great Lord Protector, I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if he can state the present condition of the statue of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector, which has been presented to the nation by the munificence of a private donor, and at what date, and on what site, it will be erected in Westminster?

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): Before the right honourable Gentleman answers that Question may I ask whether there is any precedent for granting a site in the vicinity of this House for the erection of a statue to a murderer?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): I understand that the statue of Oliver Cromwell which has been promised to the nation by a private donor is advancing towards completion; but I am unable to say when it will be finished. The site selected by my predecessor in the Westminster Hall Garden will be adhered to.

ADMIRALTY CONTRACTS FOR WASTE.

SIR. J. MACLURE (Lancs., Stretford): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the contracts for waste for the last few years have been given to the same two or three firms; and whether he is prepared to allow three Members of the House, not interested in the trade, to examine the samples and the deliveries in various

dockyards, in order to compare the sample with the actual deliveries, and at the same time to give the names of the contractors and prices charged by each?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (MR. W. E. MACARTNEY, Antrim, S.): The reply to the first paragraph of the Question is, as regards the past three years, in the affirmative, and to the second paragraph in the negative.

PROVINCE OF YORK CONVOCATION AND THE BURIALS LAWS.

MR. SIDEBOTHAM (Cheshire, Hyde): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the Report of a Debate on the Burial Laws in the Upper House of the Convocation of the Province of York, and to the fact that a Resolution expressing the opinion that the recent Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on the Burial Laws affords a satisfactory basis of legislation for the consolidation and revision of the existing Laws of Burial, was moved by the Bishop of Newcastle, seconded and supported by the Bishops of Durham and Chester, and unanimously adopted; and whether he can now state if he hopes to introduce a Burials Bill during the present Session?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (SIR M. WHITE RIDLEY, Lancs., Blackpool): Yes; I have read with much interest a Report of the Debate to which my honourable Friend refers. A Burials Bill is now practically ready, and I can only repeat the hope, which I have already expressed, that I may have an opportunity of introducing it during the present Session. In the present state of public business, however, I am obliged to say that I am not able to make any promise in the matter.

TELEGRAPHISTS AND SORTING DUTIES.

COLONEL DALBIAC (Camberwell, N): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether all telegraphists entering the Government service since 1896 are expected to acquire a knowledge of sorting duties; and whether the addi-

tional increment for acquaintance with postal work will be granted to them after five years' service?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (for Mr. HANBURY): Notice was given in January 1896 that on and after the 1st February 1896, at all provincial offices at which there is a divided staff for sorting and for telegraph duties, male candidates for appointment would be required to qualify both in postal and telegraph duties, and be appointed on vacancies to a combined class of sorting clerks and telegraphists. A similar arrangement for dual training of new entrants applies in London. This being so, such officers will not be eligible for the additional increment.

SOLDIERS' TEETH.

COLONEL DALBIAC: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War, if he will state the number of recruits rejected during the past year on account of bad teeth, who were in every other respect fully up to the required standard?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): 1,767 recruits were rejected in the year 1898 under the heading "Loss or decay of many teeth."

FOREIGN TRADE WITH THE SAMOAN ISLANDS.

MR. HEDDERWICK (Wicks Burghs): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state the total amounts of the export and import trades of the Samoan Islands, and the relative interests of Great Britain, America, and Germany therein?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. ST. JOHN BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The Consul's Report on the Trade of Samoa, published in April last, shows that the exports in 1897 were £47,839, and the imports £65,926. The relative interests

of Great Britain, America and Germany were as follows:—Exports: British Empire, £5,405; United States, £311; Germany, £10,861. Imports: British Empire, £34,754; United States, £15,328; Germany, £10,683.

FOREIGNERS IN SAMOA.

MR. HEDDERWICK: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state the total number of Europeans resident in the Samoan Islands, and the proportions, relatively to the total, of the British, American, and German subjects in residence there?

MR. BRODRICK: The latest Report from Her Majesty's Consul shows that there are 439 British subjects in the Samoan Islands. Of these 141 are British born and 298 half-castes. No general census has been taken since 1895, when the number of Germans was 120 and of Americans 26, but these figures are probably not correct at the present moment.

MALWA OPIUM TRADE.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has observed the statement of the quantity of Malwa opium imported into Ningpo in 1898 on page 9 of the Consular Report on the trade of Ningpo for 1898, just issued, and, as that is apparently an important error, could he state what is the correct quantity.

MR. BRODRICK: The amount given in the Return as imported in 1898 is clearly an error. I am afraid I cannot give the correct figure from information in my possession, but inquiry will be made at once.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION IN SCOTLAND.

MR. J. WILSON (Falkirk): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will lay upon the Table the statistics of the proceedings in sheriff courts in Scotland, under

the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1897, and the Employers' Liability Act, 1880, during the year 1898?

SIR J. LENG (Dundee) had the following Question on the same subject: To ask the Lord Advocate, whether the Local Government Board in Scotland will present to Parliament a Report and statistics relating to proceedings in sheriff courts in Scotland under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1897, and the Employers' Liability Act, 1880, during the year 1898, corresponding to those issued by the Home Office for England and Wales.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: I have arranged with the Secretary for Scotland that the statistics mentioned in the Question shall be collected. As soon as they are ready, I shall be glad to lay them on the Table. The honourable Member for Dundee will also, perhaps, accept this as an answer to the Question which he has addressed to the Lord Advocate.

DEDUCTIONS FROM GOVERNMENT PAY.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state on what grounds a deduction of at least 10 per cent. is made from the Government pay of officers pensioned from the Army or Navy; could he state what the sum so obtained by the Treasury amounts to; and whether he would consider the abolition of the deduction, or making it from the half or retired pay of those officers affected, instead of as at present from the pay of the office or appointment held?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (for Mr. HANBURY): The deduction in question is statutory, being made in pursuance of rules drawn up by the Treasury under section 6 of the Superannuation Act, 1887. The preamble of those rules explains that the general principle adopted by Parliament has been that, where any person receiving non-effective pay on account of service to the State accepts fresh State em-

ployment, the State should benefit by some saving upon the sums otherwise payable to such person on account of his non-effective pay, and of the emoluments of his fresh employment. The deduction is made from the civil salary because, when retired pay has been received in the form of a gratuity, or any non-effective pay has been commuted, abatement can be made in no other way; and, also, because retired pay represents the closing of a bargain between the officer and the Board of Admiralty, or the Secretary of State for War, which it is better not to disturb; while the civil salary is a matter still open to arrangement when each appointment is made. The total amount of these deductions in the year ending 31st March 1898 was a little under £4,000. For the reasons given above it is not proposed to make any change in the existing arrangements.

CAPTAIN NORTON: May I ask if it is the fact that this deduction is made both on the retired pay and the current pay?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS: I am not certain; perhaps the honourable Gentleman will put a Question down to the Secretary of the Treasury.

THE NIGER COMPANY.

SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Government expect to be able to make any announcement to the House as to their negotiations with the Niger Company?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I cannot say at present.

WRECKS IN THE ATLANTIC.

SIR J. LENG: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state the number and tonnage of vessels lost in the North Atlantic with all hands during the heavy gales of last winter; and whether, in view of the great sacrifice of lives which occurred, he is pre-

pared to give effect to the proposals of the Load Line Committee for reducing the winter North Atlantic freeboard, and thus increasing the risk to the lives of seamen in future winters?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): The number of British vessels lost in the North Atlantic with all hands during last winter was nine. Their net tonnage was 16,701, and the number of lives lost with them was 278. The proposals of the recent Load Line Committee have been given effect to, but I am advised that there is no reason whatever to think that any one of these missing steamers had an insufficient freeboard. In fact, four of the vessels in question were bound by the new regulations to have two inches more freeboard than was formerly required; of the remaining five, one was from a port to which the North Atlantic winter freeboard has never applied, one had two inches more and one had five inches more clear side than the old rules required.

IRISH AGRICULTURAL BILL.

MR. W. REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the Bill dealing with Irish Agriculture is to be introduced?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): I hope to be able to introduce this Bill before Whitsuntide, but it will have to be under the Ten Minutes Rule.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): It would be a great convenience if the right honourable Gentleman could make some general statement as to the course he intends to adopt with regard to Irish business.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: No, Sir; I can hardly make a statement.

SWINE FEVER PROSECUTIONS.

MR. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthen, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that it is the practice of some benches of magistrates to make

orders granting to police constables in charge of prosecutions under the Swine Fever Acts half the fine inflicted on a defendant; and whether such an order is in accordance with the law?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: I am not aware that such a practice is in vogue, and should like to have definite information of some particular instance of it before expressing any opinion as to its legality.

THE SINKING FUND.

SIR H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what amount of Consols has been purchased with Savings Bank Funds, or for the purpose of the Sinking Funds, during the last 10 years; what amount, and at what cost, has been purchased at a discount; and what amount, and at what cost, has been purchased at a premium?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The amount of Consols purchased during the last 10 years with Savings Bank money and with Sinking Fund money was £112,887,409. Of this, £37,980,400 was bought at or below par prior to the 1st April 1894, at a cost of £37,004,984, or at an average discount of 2.6 per cent.; and subsequently £74,907,009 above par, at a cost of £80,343,249, or at an average premium of 7.2 per cent. The outlays in the Consol market would have been larger had it not been that the Government have been able to effect investments in Local Loans Stock, Irish Guaranteed Land Stock and other Parliamentary securities.

AUCKLAND (NEW ZEALAND) HARBOUR.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Eastbourne): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether he can now inform the House of the amount of the grant-in-aid sanctioned under Vote 10 by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, to enable the Harbour Board at Auckland, New Zealand, to equip the new dock there with requisite machinery and plant

so as to make it available for Naval purposes, in accordance with the application made last year, and supported in this House?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. A. CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): The Admiralty have, with the sanction of the Treasury, agreed to give the Auckland Harbour Board an annual subsidy of £2,950 for 30 years. The principal conditions attached to the grant are (1) that the Harbour Board shall, at their expense, erect certain additional buildings and machinery, a deep water jetty and sheers, and shall put and keep the dock and appliances in an efficient condition; (2) that the Admiralty shall at all times have priority of use of both dock and machinery; (3) that no charge shall be made for their use by Her Majesty's ships beyond expenses actually incurred by the Harbour Board; (4) that in the event of the earnings for the use by vessels other than Her Majesty's ships of the machinery, etc., provided under this arrangement exceeding the amount required for maintenance and wages, the Admiralty shall participate in such earnings; (5) that the Admiralty shall have the right to terminate the agreement at any time, should the dock, machinery, etc., not be kept in working order to the satisfaction of the commander-in-chief on the station.

DR. LAMONT'S CASE.

SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Dr. Lamont (recently unanimously acquitted of certain charges of issuing false certificates of vaccination brought against him by the procurator fiscal at Lochmaddy) who was arrested in his mother's house in Glasgow at 12 o'clock p.m. on the 17th of last September, and locked up in a police cell in Glasgow till the morning of 19th September, and on being taken to Lochmaddy was again locked up in a police cell during the nights of 20th and 21st September; whether he is aware that the charge is dated Lochmaddy, the 19th September, or two days after Dr. Lamont was arrested in Glasgow, and the warrant for his apprehension is dated the 21st September, or four days after he was apprehended;

and will he explain on what authority Dr. Lamont was apprehended and locked up; whether the warrant in question was granted by Dr. W. P. Mackenzie, an honorary sheriff-substitute, who was subsequently one of the witnesses for the Crown against Dr. Lamont; what right had the procurator fiscal to cause Dr. Lamont's arrest and imprisonment four days before the issue of a warrant for his apprehension; whether, if such an irregularity took place, he will cancel Dr. Mackenzie's commission as honorary sheriff-substitute and remove the procurator fiscal in question from his office; and whether the Scotch Office has submitted to the Treasury the recommendation unanimously made by the jury which tried Dr. Lamont, that the Crown should make him pecuniary compensation for the loss and indignities to which he had been subjected; and, if so, with what result?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): The honourable Baronet called my attention to the subject-matter of this Question on the 27th ultimo, and I refer him to the answer I then gave, to the terms of which I adhere. The statement in the second paragraph of this Question is not correct. The original charge against Dr. Lamont was dated, Lochmaddy, 10th September, with warrant for apprehension of same date; and it was on this charge and warrant that his apprehension was ordered and was executed in Glasgow on the 17th. The charge mentioned in the Question was a subsequent charge including further cases, the warrant upon which did not need to be executed as Dr. Lamont was already in custody. I have already explained that the warrant was issued in ordinary course by the honorary sheriff-substitute; there was therefore no irregularity in the apprehension. As regards the last paragraph, the recommendation of the jury was not as stated, but was that Dr. Lamont's expenses should be paid. I have already expressed my regret that Dr. Lamont should have been arrested, but as I also said that in my judgment in the circumstances the arrest was justifiable, there is no precedent for asking the Treasury to make any such payment.

HOURS OF LABOUR IN JAM FACTORIES.

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the existing state of affairs as regards the conditions of labour in fruit-preserving factories has been brought to his notice; whether he has observed that the Chief Inspector's Report for 1897 shows that in some factories arduous work is permitted to young persons during a day of unlimited duration throughout the months of June, July, August, and September on the plea of the spoiling of fruit, whereas other firms meet the extra demand made by the arrival of the fruit by additions to the staff or readjustments of departments; whether he is aware that many factories preserve both fruit and fish, employing the same persons for both processes, thus often extending over a period of more than six months the time during which women and girls are unprotected by the Factory and Workshops Acts; and whether, seeing the proved absence of any necessity for the existing exemption, he will take steps to put a stop to this state of affairs?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: The state of affairs described in the Question is constantly under my consideration, but I have no power to remedy it, unless Parliament will agree to repeal the existing exemptions from the Factory Acts enjoyed by the trades in question. I proposed last Session that this should be done, and that the Secretary of State should be entrusted with powers to deal with the whole matter under conditions which would secure the protection of the work-people, but Parliament had no time to deal with the Bill. I think legislation in this matter is desirable.

CAB REGULATIONS IN THE METROPOLIS.

MR. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the great relief afforded by the exclusion of crawling cabs from the Strand, he can see his way to extend the scope of the regu-

lation to other main arteries of the Metropolis where the nuisance is now very conspicuous and contributes to a congestion of traffic?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: Up to the present it has not been considered necessary to take any steps in other streets than the Strand, etc., with reference to cabs illegally plying for hire. I am, of course, unwilling to interfere unless the conditions of traffic render it necessary to do so, but I am prepared to take similar measures in any other streets in which I find such action to be required.

IMPERIAL PENNY POSTAGE.

MR. HOGAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether Jamaica has joined the Imperial Penny Postal System; and whether he can specify the Colonies that still maintain a hesitating attitude in this connection?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (for Mr. HANBURY): The Government of Jamaica has decided to adopt on the 24th May the Penny Postage Scheme which is in force between this country and various British Colonies and possessions; the directors of the North Borneo Company have also decided to introduce the scheme in North Borneo and Labuan, but have not yet fixed a date for carrying their decision into effect; and the Government of Mauritius is expected to join. If these British possessions all carry out their intention on the 24th May, the only important Colonies which will then not be included in the Penny Postage Scheme will be Australia, New Zealand, and the Cape of Good Hope.

THE KING OF SAMOA.

MR. HOGAN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it will come within the province of the Joint Commission to inquire into the legality of Mataafa's exclusion from the succession in Samoa, and the extent

to which sectarian influences operated in bringing about that exclusion; and whether it is proposed to give the Samoan people any voice in the selection of their future king?

MR. BRODRICK: The question of the succession in Samoa will be reported upon by the Commissioners, whose Report will be considered by their respective Governments.

MR. HEDDERWICK: May I ask whether under the Berlin Tripartite Agreement the British Government did not oblige themselves to recognise as King any ruler of Samoa who might be elected in accordance with native custom, and whether Mataafa was not so elected?

MR. BRODRICK: I must ask for notice of that Question.

INDIAN SUGAR DUTIES.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfar): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, in addition to the new countervailing duties, German and Austrian sugar will still be subject to the general 5 per cent. impost duty; and what relation, at present prices, this duty bears to German and Austrian bounties?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): All sugar imported into India since 1894 has paid 5 per cent. *ad valorem* duty; and bounty-fed sugar will not, under the recent Act, become free from this duty. In reply to the second part of the honourable Member's Question, I can only give a very rough estimate; but the bounties on sugar imported into India from Austria and Germany may be taken on the average to be one-eighth of the value of the sugar; and, on this assumption, the 5 per cent. *ad valorem* duty would be about five-thirteenths of the amount of the bounty.

TREATMENT OF FOREIGNERS IN JAPANESE PRISONS.

MR. ASCROFT (Oldham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any satisfactory arrangements have been made by Her Majesty's Government with the Government of Japan respecting the incarceration of British subjects in Japanese

prisons; and whether any concessions have been obtained from the Japanese Government relating to the disabilities and other matters of grave importance affecting the lives and liberties of British subjects resident in Japan, referred to in their memorial presented to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs?

MR. BRODRICK: Assurances have been given by the Japanese Government that measures will be taken to provide foreign prisoners with food and accommodation in accordance with their manner of living. It is not possible to make a full reply to the second Question within the limits of an answer to a Question, but I may say that assurances have been received regarding reforms in the press law and restrictions on foreigners generally, and that there is no reason to fear that British subjects will not be fairly treated when the new treaties come into operation.

MEAT TRADE BETWEEN BELGIUM AND NEW ZEALAND.

MR. ASCROFT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the Report of Mr. Vice-Consul Venables on the trade of Belgium, and to the statement therein that the Antwerp Chamber of Commerce had addressed the central authorities at Brussels with the object of extending the trade of that country with the British Colonies by a policy of free trade, and by the removal of existing duties on those articles in which the Canadian exporters were most interested; whether he is aware that the frozen meat trade between Belgium and New Zealand and other Australasian possessions, which was of considerable importance and gave promise of considerable extension in the future, had now almost disappeared through the Belgian Government requiring that all carcases imported should have the lungs attached; and whether he would consider the advisability of approaching the Belgian Government in conjunction with representatives of the Colonies in respect to same?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I have seen the statement in the Report of Mr. Vice-Consul Venables to which the honourable Member refers. I am aware that the restriction imposed by the Belgian Government has injured the trade in frozen meat with the Australasian Colonies. Representations have been made to that Government on the subject, but so far without success.

GERMANY IN ASIA MINOR.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the political agreement recently concluded between Great Britain and Germany included an arrangement that the exploitation of Turkey in Asia Minor, or of the greater part, was to be abandoned to Germany; and whether the Smyrna-Aidin Railway is about to be sold to a German company?

MR. BRODRICK: No arrangement has been made of the nature mentioned in the first paragraph of the Question. We have no information to confirm the statement in the second paragraph.

THE TRANSVAAL.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is in a position to give the House any information as to the recent negotiations with the Boer Government regarding reforms in the Transvaal?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: I have no information to give to the House beyond what has appeared in the newspapers.

FAIR RENT CASES.

MR. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has his attention been drawn to the action of Sub-Commissioners Bailey, Byers, and

Williams where, in fixing the fair rents of two adjoining farms on the estate of the trustees of G. J. Hunter, the tenant of one of the farms was allowed $4\frac{1}{2}$ more percentage of deductions than the other, the farms being of almost equal quality; and does the Government propose to take any action in the matter?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: My attention has been drawn to the cases of the two holdings referred to by a communication received from the honourable Member. The matter, however, is not one in which the Government can interfere.

THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

MR. HOLLAND (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he can undertake that our delegates to the forthcoming Peace Conference shall be instructed to call the attention of their colleagues to that passage in his Annual Statement in which he expressed a willingness to reduce our Naval Estimates, provided the other Powers reduce theirs?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I am sure the House will feel that it would be unwise and inexpedient to make any public announcement of the instructions to be given to the British delegates at the forthcoming International Peace Conference.

CLERICAL TITHE-OWNERS.

MR. LOYD (Berks, Abingdon): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the fact that the opposition of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and other Members of both Houses (on behalf of the tithe-owning clergy) to the Poor Rate Exemption Act, 1840, was withdrawn on the express undertaking of the Government of that day that the duration of that Act should be for one year only, and that the injustice of allowing clerical tithe-owners to remain

subject to rating under the statute 43 Eliz. c. 2, while exempting all other inhabitants from liability thereunder in respect of profits arising within the parish, should be remedied in the following Session; and whether, seeing that the Act of 1840 has notwithstanding been annually renewed, and that numerous other rates have been imposed on clerical incomes for purposes from which they derive no benefit, the Government will undertake that the Poor Rate Exemption Act, 1840, shall not be included in the Schedule of the Expiring Laws Continuance Act of this year unless, in the meantime, the condition upon which its passing was obtained has been fulfilled by the passing of a Government Bill to remove or mitigate the injustice to which the tithe-owning clergy are subjected under the present rating laws?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I am not sure that my honourable Friend's narrative is an accurate one. I rather think he has been misled in some particulars, for the Act of 1840 was brought in in order to make it possible to collect the rates, and the grievance alleged to attach to this Act was a grievance dealing with the question of the proper burden as between realty and personalty, and not specially in connection with tithe rent-charge. If we were to adopt the course suggested, and not renew the Act of 1840, the result, I am informed, would be that no rates could be collected throughout the country—a result which would be impossible. The whole matter, however, is, as my honourable Friend knows, under the consideration of the Government, and though we do not propose this particular remedy, it is by no means to be implied that we have no remedy to propose.

MR. LOYD: Will the right honourable Gentleman say that the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill shall be brought in at an earlier period than usual this Session so as to give an opportunity of discussing this very important question of tithe rating?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: No, Sir; I should deprecate making the Expiring Laws Continuance Act an open battlefield for controversy upon the various Acts included in its schedule.

THE GRANT TO LORD KITCHENER.

MR. W. REDMOND: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Bill for the grant to Lord Kitchener will be introduced?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I can only repeat that a week's notice shall be given to the House before the Bill is taken.

MR. J. ELLIS (Notts, Rushcliffe): Will it be before Whitsuntide?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am afraid I cannot add anything to the answer I have just given.

NEW WINE DUTIES.

MR. W. REDMOND: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he has received representations from the Australian Colonies protesting against the new wine duties; and whether the Government intend to exempt Australian wines from the proposed new tax?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: No direct communication has been received; but Lord Strathcona, on behalf of the Agents-General of all Colonies, has represented their objections to the proposed tax. The second Question should be addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Will the House be placed in possession of the representations.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: No representations have been made to me except verbal ones by Lord Strathcona.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith), CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, in the Chair.]

(In the Committee.)

CLAUSE 1.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 7, to leave out the words 'metropolitan boroughs,' and insert the word 'districts' instead thereof."—(Mr. Stuart.)

MR. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said his object was to bring the title of the units which the Bill dealt with into accord with fact. The units which the Bill dealt with were the rich and poor persons of the trading classes which constituted the unit of existence. They might draw a wall round it, and it was still a self-providing unit, as much as any unit could be self-providing in the present state of commercial enterprise. Let them look at the boroughs which were to be carved out, and take those which were already carved out in the Bill. Take Poplar on the one hand, and Hampstead on the other. In Poplar the rateable value was £4 10s. per head, whilst in Hampstead it was something like £12. Let them consider the more extreme cases of St. James's, Westminster, where they had a rateable value of £35 per head, and compare it with Mile End Old Town, where they had a rateable value of about one-tenth part of that. It was not the intention of this Bill to make that district into a borough, but even if they added all the units round about it it would not make very much difference. They had in one part of London the labouring classes and in another the mercantile and wealthy classes, which could only be considered as parts of a whole which would be incomplete unless all the parts were added to it. If they sought for anything in the nature of an ordinary borough they could find nothing smaller than the administrative county of London. This was recognised as a fact, and he was not laying down a

theoretical division by pointing out how the trades were located in different parts of London. He appealed to the Members representing great borough constituencies in the rest of England to consider what would be the result if those districts were split up. He would ask the honourable Member for Liverpool what that municipality would be if Sefton Park were cut out and made into a borough. Would it have any of the elements of a borough? It would be almost as grotesque as some of the separate elements proposed in London government. He had no objection to those districts being local areas for local government, but he adhered to the words of the Royal Commission, which laid down that London contained within itself large areas which could not wisely be weakened or endangered. He entirely agreed with the substance of the Bill in one part, but those areas should not be weakened, but strengthened. Look at the limitation which legislation had imposed upon those divisions of London which were now to be called boroughs. Putting aside the question of the police, which affects all London, they were on a different basis entirely to the big towns, the government of which is solely in the hands of the central authority. Take the boroughs which they were about to establish, and observe how many of the elements of local life would pass to those boroughs under this Measure. There was the question of drainage, of water supply, and of gas. Did they suppose that anyone would argue that the new municipalities in London were to deal with those questions? No, for they were to be deprived of a large number of functions which appertained to all ordinary boroughs. Those great functions attaching to borough life in England would not be enjoyed by the metropolitan bodies, for London was one great town, of which the various districts were only divisions. Nearly three-fourths of the whole expenditure of the new boroughs would be imposed upon them by an extraneous authority; they would have no power over their fire brigade, and could never hope for it; they would have no power under the Building Act, and they would not have the control of technical education. Unlike the area of every other borough they would not be the area of a separate School Board, and the poor law area would not always be coter-

minous with the area of the borough. He had enumerated some of the great functions of borough life in England which were necessarily taken away, and which were not placed in the hands of the London boroughs. Were they going to bring the assessments under one common basis, or were they to part company one from the other in the future? There was now a central control which did not exist in any other borough. There was the London County Council, the Metropolitan police, the Asylums Board, the School Board, and certain other authorities, and nearly three-fourths of the whole expenditure of these boroughs would be incurred and imposed by outside authorities. How could those bodies be called by a name which is applicable only to the great existing boroughs of the North of England? The new boroughs were districts which were distinct portions of the one great whole covering the administrative county of London, and the object of the Amendment was to ask the Committee to call these new bodies what they really were. Metropolitan boroughs were meant to indicate something different altogether from other boroughs, and yet they called them boroughs. The word "metropolitan" was cast to the wind, and they retained that portion of the name which was misapplied. A good deal had been said about the advisability of dignifying local life, and he was in favour of that. He hoped the Bill would secure greater interest in local life, which was greatly needed in London. He did not believe, however, that greater interest in local life in London would be secured by giving those districts the wrong name, or by committing what is, more or less, in the nature of a pious fraud. He had had a great deal to do with the administration of London affairs, and he had observed enormous progress in local life. There had been more interest in vestry work, and it was now more successfully undertaken than was the case 10 years ago. In the case of Shoreditch they had changed an absolutely worthless vestry into an active, able, and energetic body, which had created libraries, installed electric light, undertaken technical education, erected baths and washhouses, and had done much for the benefit of that district. That success was founded upon the fact that a few strong and

determined men had cleared out that worthless vestry and had renovated it. That result had been seen in many other parts of London. That result depended on individual effort, and not in trying to get any names which did not rightly belong to them. The thing that had animated Londoners had been the feeling that they belonged to one great and noble city, of which they were very proud indeed—quite as proud on that side of the House as they were of the City of London on the other side. He regretted that in this Bill there was no attempt made to dignify or mark out that London in any sense was one city, and therefore it was not a sound piece of London reform. They wanted to recognise facts as they were, and dignify and strengthen the local government of London by creating a feeling of common citizenship. It was contemplated under this Bill to divide into separate boroughs districts which were the powerful, great, and admirable areas of a mighty city, but this Measure would leave London, as far as nomenclature was concerned, divided into separate entities, instead of leaving the great community of London unimpaired.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E): The question between the honourable Gentleman and ourselves is evidently one of language. It is whether a particular area should be denominated district or borough. By the Amendment the constitution of the areas or the powers to be granted to them are not affected. I am far from asserting that it is a matter of indifference by what name a particular unit of local government is named, and we have to decide what is the most appropriate name to be given to the boroughs, what will most conduce to arousing in them that flame of local energy and local zeal which the honourable Gentleman desires as much as the framers of the Bill. The honourable Gentleman has laid down the proposition that nothing ought to be called a borough which is not a self-contained entity, and by that I understand the honourable Gentleman to mean a community in which all the classes concerned in the work of the unit reside within its area. If that definition is to be rigidly adhered to, there is hardly a single borough in the country which deserves

the appellation of borough, for there is hardly a single borough anywhere in which a large number of those engaged in the most important work of that borough do not reside outside its limit. If the honourable Gentleman's views are to be carried to their extreme consequence, I presume that the whole of London ought not to be described as the City, unless, for example, Chislehurst is brought within its limits, a proposition which neither the honourable Gentleman nor anybody else wishes to maintain. I object to these theoretical views of the honourable Gentleman, and I will now address myself to the question whether the name borough is more likely to assist the dignity of local life which this Bill is intended to further. The honourable Member appears to be afraid that, if you use the word borough instead of district, those who live in a borough—that is to say, in Chelsea, Shoreditch, Poplar, Westminster, and so forth—may forget that they are citizens of London. That is an illusionary theory. The unity of London is bound up with all our habits of thought and with all our linguistic practices so closely that it cannot be forgotten by anybody. A man going to the seaside from Chelsea or Shoreditch speaks of leaving London, and when he returns he does not say he is returning to Chelsea or Shoreditch, but to London, or to town. Moreover, the unity of London is embodied in the constitution of London itself. When the honourable Member for Hoxton, as the mouthpiece of the London County Council, of which he is so able a representative, belittles the new areas and describes them as districts and not boroughs, he makes himself the engine of something which almost deserves to be described as petty jealousy. I cannot imagine what the London County Council has to gain by the fact that Westminster, Chelsea, or Paddington and the rest are henceforth to be called districts, or what it has to lose by their being called boroughs. The word "borough" has long been connected in this country with the best forms of civic life which we possess. The Government seeks to stimulate the energies of the subordinate areas of London, and we believe no small step in that direction will be taken if we associate with the new constitutions of these areas a

name which has been distinguished in our civil life.

*SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said the right honourable Gentleman who had charge of the Bill appeared to imagine that the name of borough was appropriate to these new bodies, whereas it was the most inappropriate which could have been chosen, because the proposed boroughs had none of the characteristics of the boroughs under the Municipal Corporations Act. They might be described as "M. B.," which had hitherto meant a clerical waistcoat, and possibly that was what they would be called to distinguish them from boroughs with which they had little or nothing in common. The districts themselves had not asked to be called boroughs, and at the great conference of the London authorities which took place in 1896, the word borough did not appear. It was suggested a little prior to 1896 that the name of mayor should be applied to the chairmen of the councils, but that was all. It was not until the Metropolitan Municipal Association, which was made up of peers and gentlemen who had not previously taken part in London local life, was formed that the name of municipal boroughs was brought forward for the new districts, and to introduce the name of borough into the Bill would be to lead to confusion and ambiguity, because boroughs had peculiar powers which these new creations would not possess. One point in which they would differ would be in the control of the police; there was no intention of having a Watch Committee, for instance.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: A Watch Committee is not a necessity. You can have a borough without a Watch Committee.

*SIR C. DILKE said that was so, but contended that there were no boroughs which did not differ very greatly from those which were proposed under this Bill, and he ventured to say that the control of the police was one of the centres of borough life in great boroughs. He thought he might say without fear of contradiction that these new creations would possess none of the powers of a borough, and, that being so, they ought not to be so termed. They were really districts, and ought to be so called.

MR. BIRRELL (Fife, W.) said he could not appreciate the new-fangled passion of the First Lord of the Treasury for calling old things by new names. If it were possible to create, as the Bill sought to do, certain important boroughs round about London, well and good, but the Government knew perfectly well that it was impossible to evolve out of the chaos of all these localities that feeling of pride for the birthplace of these institutions. Londoners had that feeling, but it was a feeling for London itself as a whole, and could not be created for a particular part. It was a mistake to suppose that a man ceased to be vulgar because he changed his name. They had been told that vestries were vulgar. He denied it; it was not the vestries who were vulgar, but the people who sat upon them, and by calling these localities by a new name no difference would be made in the character and personality of those who sat upon them. The right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury was so much against vestries that he had stooped in the gutter to pick up the word *alderman*. He (Mr. Birrell) would venture to say that if they searched the literature of the country for the last 300 years—from the great poet Shakespeare down to Kipling—they would not find the word used except as synonymous with gluttony. He thought the First Lord of the Treasury had a terrible time before him. He was the putative father of these 15 new cities—one was enough for Romulus, who was suckled by a wolf—the right honourable Gentleman would create them without traditions and without municipalities, and without cooks, and he would have to accept day after day their hospitality. Keen would be his pangs of indigestion and keener still would be the feeling that he nursed the opinion which impelled the steel.

MR. HOLLAND (Tower Hamlets, Bow) did not agree that the discussion was academic in its character, but even if it was, the language of the Bill itself was more correct than that which the honourable Member for Shoreditch wished the Committee to accept. It might be true that these new creations might lack many of the features which boroughs in the provinces possessed, but it could not be denied that the areas of the London boroughs would be infinitely more im-

portant and infinitely more deserving of the title of boroughs than some of the small boroughs in the various parts of England. In his opinion, it went a great deal further than a question of language. The object of the Amendment was quite clear. The Government in considering the reform of London government preferred that the City of London should remain as now, surrounded by the new municipalities to be created. He hoped the Government would not accept any of the Amendments which affected the title of the districts, or the districts themselves, as they were scheduled in the Bill.

MR. BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) denied that the object of the Amendment was to alter the status or dignity of the new bodies, and he felt that unless they were called by a name to which they were entitled it would be most misleading, and would give them the impression that they were to become more powerful and independent bodies than would, in his opinion, be for the good government of London. The chief objection that he found was that the words of the Bill tended to make the new local bodies think that they had isolated and independent lives, and that they would be able to carry on their own local operation without a central authority at all. He desired to know the reason which the Government had for changing the words in the Bill, which was really a sort of hotch-potch of the Local Government Act of 1888 and the Municipal Corporations Act of 1882. The right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury in introducing the Measure had said that, as regard constitution and status, these new local bodies would be practically identical with municipalities throughout the country. That was hardly correct, because they would not have any of the powers of those municipalities. The only things which they would have which were taken from the Municipal Corporations Act were "*aldermen*," "*audits*," and the "*compulsory retirement of one-third of the council each year*," instead of the re-election of the whole of every council at the end of every third year, and for that reason these new bodies were to be called municipalities. He thought they were entitled to ask the Government how far they intended

to go when creating these municipalities in granting them new powers. The right honourable Gentleman had said in a speech to a deputation from the Strand vestry that when Westminster was created under the Bill he hoped that it would have great dignity, power, and control, and that it would be practically independent of the London County Council. He (Mr. Buxton) thought that the Committee was entitled to ask the right honourable Gentleman whether such language as that was not calculated to give an utterly erroneous impression to the new bodies as to their powers, and to lead to a good deal of friction with the central authority.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Does the honourable Gentleman desire that the district bodies which he would set up should be wholly dependent in every particular?

MR. BUXTON said that that was not the question. He thought the words which had been used would create a wrong impression in the minds of the new bodies which could never be boroughs or municipalities in the true sense of the word; but which must in their powers always be subordinate to the central authority. He thought that it was desirable that the subordinate bodies should have powers to carry on their work with efficiency and economy, but in his opinion they were, and always must remain, subordinate to the central authority, and he desired to emphasise that fact.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said that the word "borough" had been used for centuries in London without damage to the City or the County Council or any other co-ordinate body. For instance, there was the borough of Southwark. In his opinion, a more fallacious argument did not exist than that which set up the fact that the word "borough" could only be used in the particular sense of the Municipal Corporations Act. When the right honourable Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean first entered the House he sat for what was called the borough of Chelsea. The whole Debate had been a vain attempt to attain an accuracy

which could not be reached, and the instance which he had shown proved that the word could be used for quite another purpose without any serious danger to anybody at all. It was not correct to say that all boroughs had control of their police and other matters, because that was not the fact. He desired to know what the right honourable Gentleman the Member for East Fife meant when he suggested at an earlier stage of the Bill that a more attractive title should be given to the new local bodies to be created.

MR. LAWSON WALTON (Leeds, E.) was of opinion that it would be difficult to find a more inaccurate and misleading expression than that which had been adopted under the Bill for the purpose of describing the new corporation. The answer to the honourable Gentleman who had just spoken was obviously that the word "borough" as used in this case was not used in the sense that it was in the case of the old county boroughs or the Parliamentary boroughs, which always sent two burgesses to the House of Commons. The grave objection to the word was that in the Bill it was used in an entirely contradictory sense. The word "district," which conveyed the idea of unity and community, was, in his opinion, a better word. It was not a mere speculation, because they had had a consistent course of legislation dealing with the municipal government of London from the year 1855, from which time they had had two rival policies—that of making the vestries the instrument of municipal government, or that of extending the new municipal powers to the central body. Now, which of those policies had given consistent expression to the views of both Parties in the House? If they had, from 1855 down to 1899, a consistent policy of treating the central authority as the municipality and as the instrument of municipal government, the moment they left that line and sought to extend the same power to the various component districts they made an entirely new departure. He asked the House to look at the various powers extended to the London County Council, which was the real centre. If the use of the word "borough" implied the notion of separation and independence, then under this Bill it was an expression

which was misleading and inappropriate. This was not a question of incorporation, because the vestries and district boards of London were already incorporated, but it was a question of finding a fit designation for an entity which was already known to the law. He could not congratulate the Government upon the word "borough." If the word was used simply to increase the dignity, surely there were other words which could have accomplished that object. The suggestion made by the Commission was that they should be called councils, and that their chief officer should be known as the mayor, and everybody seemed content that mayor and council should be the future designation of those bodies which were already incorporated. Why the area was to be called the borough was difficult to discover. He asked the Committee to say that this name was a reflection upon the capacity of the English language, for it was obviously an inaccurate expression, and, therefore, he requested the Government to reconsider the phraseology of this Bill.

*EARL PERCY (Kensington, S.) said he was exceedingly glad that this Amendment had been moved, because it showed the real character of the opposition to this Bill. On the previous night the Government were attacked for not extending to the City the same advantages and the same reforms which were being extended to other areas, and now they were asked by the honourable Member for Shoreditch to interpret those reforms as consisting only in stereotyping existing Acts and in bestowing upon them a totally irrelevant and misleading title. He could not see why they should deny to these new districts the title of borough, which conferred upon them a name in relation to their duties, and substitute for it one which conveyed that idea which was associated with district boards, whose type of government was what they were particularly anxious to get rid of. The point was, whether any district could be created a borough under the Municipal Corporations Act unless it had all the powers which, according to the right honourable Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean, would not be possessed or exercised by those future areas. So far as he was aware

Mr. Lawson Walton.

absolute discretion in that matter was left to the Privy Council, with the exception that such a borough must be a county in itself, or must have a certain population, which is placed as low as 50,000. Kensington, which had been designated a town in Acts of Parliament as long ago as 1835, had a far greater right to that appellation than the vast majority of towns and boroughs now existing under the Municipal Corporations Act. Of the whole 304 towns and boroughs now existing under that Act only two had a higher rateable value than Kensington, and only 13 had a larger population. The vestry of Kensington now performed almost all the duties which a borough possessed. The late Home Secretary and Lord Rosebery not long ago, when discussing this question of London government, stated that their Party were anxious and willing to provide a stimulus for the electors of London to take a larger interest in local affairs by offering them more attractive titles. Did the right honourable Gentleman really think that by reducing districts, which in the Acts of Parliament had the designation of a town, to the same level as district boards under Schedule B (Parishes), that he would be conferring upon them that stimulus to municipal life? One of the great objects of this Bill was that, having created them, they were entitled to interpret their powers in the larger sense, and to have a title which would be a stimulus to them in their desire to extend their local activity.

Mr. HALDANE (Haddington) said he had listened to the speech of the Member for Kensington in the hope that he might have thrown some light on the motives of the Government for adopting this title. He had not, however, done so, and he seemed to agree with the First Lord of the Treasury that one valuable result would be to rouse the flame of local energy and zeal in these districts. If the Government depended upon calling things by a wrong name, which did not describe what they really were, for raising energy and zeal, they were building upon a very slender foundation. What had become of the scheme which the President of the Board of Trade advocated in 1888, when he said that only the want of opportunity prevented him from attempting

to set up district councils in the great administrative county of London? They now proposed to make divisions which they miscalled boroughs, and which were much more district councils than anything which they were in the habit of regarding as boroughs. The Government had given them another name, and he asked why? The Committee appointed in 1894 put forward in their Report certain proposals for the reform of London government, and the City proposals were that there should be created a number of boroughs—13 at first, and afterwards 10—and they were to form a sort of ring round the City. That proposal got the name of Tenification, and it was the alternative proposal to the carrying out of the Report of the Commission, and it got rid of reforming the Corporation of London by creating a number of boroughs throughout the area of London. He did not think the Government could throw the President of the Board of Trade altogether overboard, but they could take the completion of his scheme and call them by different names, and that was precisely what the Government had done, for they had labelled them “boroughs.” Therefore they had called boroughs what were really district councils. Why was the name changed? It was no doubt because they considered that it was their sacred and most bounden duty to please the enemies of the reform of London government, and so they made this concession.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said that, as a matter of fact, London was a number of towns which had been brought together by force of circumstances. People used to stop at the village of Charing Cross, and now they had Camden Town and Kentish Town. His honourable Friend represented a part of the old City of Westminster, and, therefore, he would point out that London had never been entirely a unit. It had been pointed out that London was, so to speak, one city, and that it was practically the same town, but that was not so, as he had already shown. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for East Fife had argued in some mysterious way or other that the word “borough” meant “division,” and the word “division” meant “unit.” He had not heard that the honourable Member for Shoreditch had any great bulk

of public opinion behind his views, for he had not brought a petition from his district in favour of them. The constituency which he represented were all in favour of a municipality, and, surely if there was anything at all in the name, they were entitled to have that name if they liked it. There was no doubt that some of the work must be done by the central body, and he believed that the London County Council had done their work very well, and he would ask the House not to take away any of those powers which they had exercised successfully.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I do earnestly appeal to the Committee now to allow the discussion on this Amendment to come to a close.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR stated that if he had thought that this was an unimportant matter he should not have intruded. He thought, however, that this meant more than merely fighting over a name. It involved consequences which were quite typical of the policy adopted by the Government, and he wished to speak a word about what he believed were the true interests of London in the matter. If this Amendment meant that they were to recognise the position of those boroughs at the expense of the unity of London, then he thought the Government were taking a disastrous step, which must react upon themselves. It was true that it was within the discretion of the Government to call these bodies what they liked, but they were not going to make them energetic and zealous simply by giving them this name. His honourable Friend the Member for Haddington had pointed out that this title was objected to by the President of the Board of Trade, and they might go back to the recommendation of the Commission of 1854, when the Government rejected the proposition to create boroughs, and proceeded on different lines, by establishing the various vestries and district boards which were now the local authorities in London. That was a fact which he did not think his right honourable Friend would contradict. In the interests of the good administration of London in important particulars, the Government could not take a worse step for their Bill than, at the very outset, to arouse so many suspicions as would be

aroused by the adoption of this name for the local authorities. The great fault of the Bill was that it did not frankly recognise that for the purposes of good administration in London there must be a united London. And if they were going to have a united London they must take into consideration the position of the City. He did not wish in the least to belittle or criticise too severely the City, but one great obstacle to the unity of London was the difficulties presented to the central administration by the existence of the powers of the City in their present form. The Government had, most fatally for themselves and the interests of the City, given themselves into the hands of the various monopolies of the City. There they were sitting behind the Government—the chairmen of railway companies, water companies, gas companies, etc. He would go one step further. It was obvious that if they could not have 27 boroughs or divisions in London acting regardless of each other, they must have a controlling authority somewhere. If honourable Gentlemen opposite refused to take the London County Council as the co-ordinating and controlling authority they

would have to look elsewhere, namely, to the Local Government Board—an official bureaucracy.

***THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES:** Order, order! The only question before the Committee is whether these areas are to be called districts or boroughs.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR said he did not wish to transgress the limits of debate, but only to show that for the interests of London the large groups of boroughs must have some relation to the central authority, and that the Bill, as it stood, would withdraw the boroughs from the control of that central authority. He regretted to believe that the policy of the Government, whether they wished or intended it or not, would bring disastrous consequences on London as a whole, and he wished to protest in the strongest terms against it.

Question put—

"That the words 'metropolitan boroughs' stand part of the clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 242; Noes 130.—(Division List No. 97.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
Aird, John
Allhusen, Augustus Henry Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Arnold, Alfred
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Ascroft, Robert
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. Joceline Fitzroy
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Baird John George Alexander
Balcarras, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r
Balfour, Rt. Hon. Gerald W. (Leeds)
Banbury, Frederick George
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Barry, Rt. Hon. A. H. Smith (Hunts)
Bartley, George C. T.
Barton, Dunbar Plunket
Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Beach, W. W. Bramston (Hants)
Beckett, Ernest William
Begg, Ferdinand Faithfull
Bemrose, Sir Henry Howe
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Beresford, Lord Charles
Bethell, Commander
Bhowaggee, Sir M. M.
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bolitho, Thomas Bedford
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-

Boulnois, Edmund
Bousfield, William Robert
Bowles, Capt. H. F. (Middlesex)
Bowles, T. Gibson (King's Lynn)
Brassey, Albert
Broderick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Brymer, William Ernest
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, John George
Carlile, William Walter
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbyshire)
Cayzer, Sir Charles William
Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, East)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (Birm.)
Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Chelsea, Viscount
Clarke, Sir Edw. (Plymouth)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coddington, Sir William
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Compton, Lord Alwyn
Cook, Fred. Lucan (Lambeth)
Cooke, C. W. Radcliffe (Heref'd)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Cox, Irwin Edw. B. (Harrow)
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)

Cruddas, William Donaldson
Curzon, Viscount
Dalbiac, Colonel Philip Hugh
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Dorington, Sir John Edward
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Drage, Geoffrey
Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson, Rt. Hon. Sir J. (Manch'r
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Firbank, Joseph Thomas
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose-
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Fletcher, Sir Henry
Flower, Ernest
Folkestone, Viscount
Fry, Lewis
Galloway, William Johnson
Garfit, William
Gedde, Sydney
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (St. Albans)
Giles, Charles Tyrrell
Gilliat, John Saunders
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Goldsworthy, Major-General
Gordon, Hon. John Edward

Captain Sinclair.

Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
 Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. G'rge's)
 Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
 Goulding, Edward Alfred
 Graham, Henry Robert
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Gretton, John
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Gunter, Colonel
 Hall, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Halsey, Thomas Frederick
 Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord George
 Hardy, Lawrence
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Heath, James
 Heaton, John Henniker
 Henderson, Alexander
 Hermon-Hodge, Robert Trotter
 Hill, Sir Edward Stock (Bristol)
 Hoare, E. Brodie (Hampstead)
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Hobhouse, Henry
 Holland, Hon. Lionel R. (Bow)
 Howard, Joseph
 Howell, William Tudor
 Hozier, Hn. James Henry Cecil
 Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
 Hutton, John (Yorks., N.R.)
 Jackson, Rt. Hn. Wm. Lawies
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Kemp, George
 Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
 Keswick, Henry
 Kimber, Henry
 King, Sir Henry Seymour
 Knowles, Lees
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawrence, Sir E. Durning- (Corn)
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
 Lockwood, Lt. Col. A. R.
 Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
 Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham)
 Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Liverpool)
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lowe, Francis William

Lowles, John
 Loyd, Archie Kirkham
 Lubbock, Rt. Hon. Sir John
 Lucas, Shadwell William
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdonald, John Cumming
 Maclean, James Mackenzie
 Maclure, Sir John William
 McCalmont, H. L. B. (Camba.)
 M'Iver, Sir Lewis (Edin'gh, W.)
 McKillop, James
 Markes, Henry Hananel
 Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
 Melville, Beresford Valentine
 Meysey-Thompson, Sir H.M.
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Milward, Colonel Victor
 Monk, Charles James
 Moon, Edward Robert Percy
 Morgan, Hn. Fred. (Monm'thsh.)
 Morton, Arthur H. A. (Dept'fd)
 Mount, William George
 Muntz, Philip A.
 Murray, Rt. Hn. H. A. G. (Bute)
 Murray, Charles J. (Coventry)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Myers, William Henry
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
 Penn, John
 Percy, Earl
 Pilkington, Richard
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Priestley, Sir W. Overend (Edin.)
 Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
 Purvis, Robert
 Pym, C. Guy
 Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Renshaw, Charles Bine
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Richards, Henry Charles
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter

Royds, Clement Molyneux
 Russell, Gen. F.S. (Cheltenham)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Rutherford, John
 Ryder, John Herbert Dudley
 Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
 Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
 Savory, Sir Joseph
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Spencer, Ernest
 Stanley, Edward J. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Henry M. (Lambeth)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stephens, Henry Charles
 Stewart, Sir M. J. M. Taggart
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
 Stone, Sir Benjamin
 Strauss, Arthur
 Strutt, Hon. Charles Hedley
 Thorburn, Walter
 Tomlinson, W. E. M.
 Osborne, T.
 Valentia, Viscount
 Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of Wight)
 Wharton, Rt. Hn. John Lloyd
 Whiteley, George (Stockport)
 Whitmore, Charles Algernon
 Williams, Col. R. (Dorset)
 Williams, J. Powell (Birm.)
 Wilson, John (Falkirk)
 Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
 Wylie, Alexander
 Wyndham-Quinn, Major W. H.
 Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong
 Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Allan, William (Gateshead)
 Allen, W. (Newc.-under-Lyme)
 Allison, Robert Andrew
 Asher, Alexander
 Ashton, Thomas Gair
 Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
 Atherley-Jones, L.
 Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
 Baker, Sir John
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.)
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
 Billson, Alfred
 Broadhurst, Henry
 Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
 Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
 Buchanan, Thomas Rybprn
 Burt, Thomas
 Buxton, Sydney Charles
 Caldwell, James
 Cameron, Sir Charles (Glasgow)

Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
 Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson
 Causton, Richard Knight
 Cawley, Frederick
 Channing, Francis Alliston
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Crombie John William
 Dalziel, James Henry
 Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Dillon, John
 Donelan, Captain A.
 Dunn, Sir William
 Ellis, John Edward
 Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)
 Fenwick Charles
 Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Foster, Sir Walter (Derby C.)
 Fowler, Rt. Hn. Sir Henry
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Gold, Charles

Gourley, Sir Edw. Temperley
 Grey, Sir Edward (Berwick)
 Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Harwood, George
 Hayne, Rt. Hn. Charles Seale-
 Hedderwick, Thomas Chas. H.
 Holden, Sir Angus
 Holland, W. H. (York, W.R.)
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
 Jacoby, James Alfred
 Johnson-Ferguson, Jabez E.
 Joicey, Sir James
 Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)
 Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
 Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.
 Kinlock, Sir John G. Smyth
 Kitson, Sir James
 Lambert, George
 Langley, Batty
 Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb'land)

Leng, Sir John
 Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Lewis, Lohm Herbert
 Logan, John William
 Macaleese, Daniel
 MacDonnell, Dr. M. (Queen's C.)
 M'Ghee, Richard
 M'Hugh, Patrick A. (Leitrim)
 Maddison, Fred
 Maden, John Henry
 Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
 Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
 Morgan, W. Pritchard (Merthyr)
 Morley, Charles (Breckonshire)
 Morley, Rt. Hon. J. (Montrose)
 Morton, Edw. J. C. (Devonport)
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Norton, Capt. Cecil William
 Nussey, Thomas Willans
 O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
 O'Connor, Jas. (Wicklow, W.)
 O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
 Palmer, George W. (Reading)

Paulton, James Mellor
 Perks, Robert William
 Philipps, John Wynford
 Pickersgill, Edward Hare
 Pirie, Duncan V.
 Power, Patrick Joseph
 Price, Robert John
 Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
 Reid, Sir Robert Threshie
 Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
 Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
 Schwann, Charles E.
 Scott, Chas. Prestwich (Leigh)
 Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
 Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
 Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
 Smith, Samuel (Flint)
 Soames Spicer, Albert
 Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
 Stevenson, Francis S.
 Strachey, Edward
 Stuart, James (Shoreditch)
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
 Tennant, Harold John

Thomas, Abel Carmarthen, E.)
 Thomas, Alfred (Glamorgan, E.)
 Thomas, David A. (Mertynr)
 Trevelyan, Charles Phillips
 Wallace, Robert (Edinburgh)
 Wallace, Robert (Perth)
 Walton, John Lawson (Leeds, S.)
 Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
 Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
 Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams, John Carvell (Notts)
 Wills, Sir Henry William
 Wilson, Fred. W. (Norfolk)
 Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
 Wilson, John (Govan)
 Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Huddersf'd)
 Woods, Samuel
 Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Herbert Gladstone and
 Mr. M'Arthur.

Another Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, to leave out from the word 'boroughs,' to the end of the clause, in order to insert the words 'in the manner in this section set forth' instead thereof."—(*Sir C. Dilke.*)

*SIR C. DILKE said this Amendment would take the place of the one which stood in his own name. They must discuss this Amendment fully, because it really raised the whole scheme of the construction of the Bill, and if accepted it would leave the way open for further Amendments. It constituted the most important point not raised during the Second Reading of the Bill; and it did not divide Parties as did the other Amendment which had just been divided upon. The Notice Paper showed that there were a great many Members on the other side of the House who were dissatisfied with the present constitution of the Bill in regard to the areas included in it and the areas excluded from its direct purview. Whole pages of Amendments to the Schedule stood in the names of honourable Members opposite, and many of the Conservative vestries had expressed their alarm at the provisions that the Bill contained in this respect. His contention was that they could not afford to leave to the discussion of the Schedule of the Bill the whole consideration as to whether all the areas were to be dealt with in the Bill itself, or whether most of them were to be decided by the Privy Council. On the Second Reading of the Bill there was no Debate upon the matter which

the Amendment raised. There was a Debate on two of the areas picked out from the Schedule, namely, Westminster and Wandsworth. And his honourable Friend the Member for Chelsea had expressed his dissatisfaction with the Schedule of the Bill at it stood, and had placed Amendments on the Paper.

*MR. WHITMORE said that might be so, but he did not express dissatisfaction with the general scheme of the Bill.

*SIR C. DILKE said the Bill proposed to pick out 16 areas, of which the great majority were in the West End of London, and to make them metropolitan boroughs by the Act itself. But it proposed in the case of 22 of the existing areas of metropolitan government, some of which were populous, some of large area, and some of large rateable value—one of them, indeed, possessed all these three qualifications—to leave them to a body repeatedly alluded to in the Bill, but not really described, namely, to the Privy Council. The Privy Council was a body consisting of one very well known Gentleman in the House, a noble Duke, and one or two messengers and office boys. It was a body which had no staff, and which had to employ special commissioners. It was not a Department, like the Local Government Board or the Home Office; but whenever it had any work thrown upon it it had to employ a staff on purpose, drawn from the other Departments. It was to this body, which scarcely had any existence except in name, of which London knew nothing,

and which knew nothing of London—it was to this body they were expected to relegate the constitution of the areas in the east, south, and north of London. Not only that, but Parliament was to hand over its powers to this body to be exercised by the Privy Council, through Orders in Council, and the local populations would not be consulted in regard to the provisions of these Orders. Those matters for which inquiries were necessary in the case of granting charters of incorporation were to be left to the discretion of the Privy Council. Now, this matter had not escaped the attention of many of the local governing bodies of the metropolis, and many Conservative vestries had expressed their alarm at the provisions of the Bill. A notable conference took place in 1890 on this matter. A certain amount of friction had been produced between the London County Council and the vestries. The vestries thought that the London County Council through one of its committees intended to break up and interfere with them, and the main object of the conference was to insist that, as a general rule, in the readjustment of London areas the administrating units should be preserved as far as possible. The vestries then pointed out that the present boundaries had existed for a very long period, some of them from before the creation of Parliament itself, and that that should be kept constantly in view in the preparation of the Bill. That was a sound conservative doctrine, and sound also as regards local government generally. The principle should not be departed from without the House understanding what it was doing. Many Conservative vestries continued to entertain these opinions, and he had no doubt that honourable Members who represented them, and who were dissatisfied with the Schedule of the Bill, would have due regard to the expression of the opinions of these highly Conservative bodies on this subject. He submitted to honourable Gentlemen opposite that it would be far better, instead of waiting for the Schedule, to decide on that clause the general principles on which the subject should be regulated. How could the Government justify the fact that with two exceptions all the new boroughs to be created were in the West End? There was great local life in the West End, but there was some

healthy local life in other districts in London also. He suggested that pressure should now be brought on the Government that had prepared this lopsided Measure. It was a matter which should not be relegated to a Schedule, and now was the time to deal with it.

Question put.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: As I understand it, the object of the right honourable Baronet and those who agree with him is that he wishes to determine in the first clause every municipal borough which is to be formed under this Bill.

***SIR C. DILKE:** Not necessarily to determine every area, but while determining some areas to lay down the principle upon which the other areas should be determined.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: We have laid down certain principles, and it is perfectly competent, if the Committee thinks that these principles are insufficient, to move additions to the Bill as it stands. I do not think, therefore, that this question is really raised by the right honourable Baronet. The question which I understand him to raise is the determination in clause 1 of practically every area in which this Bill sets up municipal boroughs. I most earnestly deprecate that course. If we are to set to work upon the task of discussing areas before we discuss powers, I venture to say that the prospects of the future progress of this Bill in Committee are very remote indeed. Nor would the right honourable Baronet if he were in charge of any Bill of this kind, for one moment—acquainted as he is with the practical working of our Parliamentary system—consent to the adoption of a course which he is good enough to press upon us. The right honourable Baronet has complained of the course the Government has taken, chiefly, as I understand him, on the ground that the areas fixed in the Schedule are chiefly drawn from the West End. I can assure him that the position of these localities, west or east, never entered our heads when framing the First Schedule of the Bill. All we thought of was whether the areas placed in that Schedule were such

as we could with confidence recommend the House to adopt without having gone through the preliminary, that of a local inquiry. It is possible that the First Schedule may be added to with advantage, and when we come to it I certainly shall not lay down any hard and fast rule and say "Thus far shall we proceed and no farther." But it must be perfectly clear to the Committee that to adopt the principle recommended by the right honourable Baronet, and to accept as they stand all the administrative areas now to be found in London, would be to foredoom the Bill from the beginning, I will not say to complete failure, but certainly to an incomplete measure of success. No one who has looked at the map of the existing areas can seriously maintain that all the administrative vestries and district boards now carrying on the work of local government in London are carrying out their labours so admirably that no reform is necessary. It is not required surely that I should go in detail through all the areas omitted from the first Schedule, in order to show that on the face of it a great many of them are absolutely unsuited to serve as units for future local government. I think the right honourable Baronet in saying all these areas are drawn from the West End is stretching the points of the compass. There is no legal definition of what constitutes the West End. It is but a very subsidiary point, however, and the real point which we have got to determine is whether the Committee, on imperfect information, is going to stereotype for ever a great many areas quite unfitted to be permanent areas in the local government of London. I earnestly deprecate that proposal. It is perfectly true—and no one knows it better than the right honourable Baronet—that the question of boundaries agitates localities far more than large questions of policy, and there is more friction, difficulty, and local feeling aroused by the smallest modification of any accustomed limit than very much larger and more permanently important subjects that come before the House. But I submit what we have to determine at present is whether the Committee is in possession of sufficient information to decide now for itself all the areas of future local government, or whether that task is to be delegated to some other body, which

would carry out investigations on the spot. We have not reached the point when it would be appropriately discussed whether that body should be the Privy Council or not. When that point is reached I shall be ready to give the fullest, and I think the most satisfactory, reasons why the Privy Council is well qualified to carry out the necessary investigations. The point now is whether these investigations are necessary, and if that be once admitted it is clear that the Committee is not in a position at the present time to settle these questions of boundaries. It must be evident if, for instance, we take the area of St. Saviour's, Southwark, as it appears on the map, and ask whether that area is to be stereotyped as a future centre of local government in London. The Committee will see it is impossible, and if it is impossible we cannot make in this Committee the necessary corrections that can only be made after a local investigation. I hope, therefore, the Committee will not contemplate the possibility of accepting the Amendment of the right honourable Baronet, which, however well intended, would have, unquestionably, the effect of wrecking the Bill at its very inception.

MR. BUXTON: I am very glad to hear the statement of the right honourable Gentleman that when we come to discuss the question of areas he will be quite willing to consider whether certain districts should or should not be included in the Schedule. That is an important declaration on the part of the right honourable Gentleman. I am quite sure that I am speaking not only for myself, but for my honourable Friends also, when I say that that is the spirit in which we desire to discuss this Amendment and all other Amendments to the Bill. I think, however, the right honourable Gentleman is wrong in thinking that honourable Gentlemen believe that every single area throughout the metropolis could be absolutely scheduled in the Bill. I quite agree that there are certain areas which require a local inquiry to decide the manner in which they should be finally constituted. I think, however, the right honourable Gentleman rather misapprehends, if I may say so, the intention and scope of this Amendment. It seems to me that we would be in a much better position to discuss the powers, duties, and

authority of these new municipalities if we knew how they are to be constituted. This Bill proposes to create the areas, differing enormously in population, rateable value, and area, and we feel it very difficult to know on what lines we can discuss their powers and duties. The right honourable Gentleman will, I think, admit that that is a matter of great moment, and very largely affects the principle of the Bill and the powers to be given to these authorities, and it is because we think that some indication should be given to us on behalf of the Government that this Amendment has been moved.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: We have laid down a certain number of areas, and in that way have laid down the principle on which the others should be constituted.

MR. BUXTON: I quite agree that a certain indication has been given by these 16 areas, but it must be remembered that they differ enormously in area and rateable value. The instructions to the Commissioners are very vague, and I do not think they afford any real indication. That is one of the principal objections I find to this Bill, and it could be largely got rid of if we discussed areas now. I would ask the right honourable Gentleman why, when he was picking and choosing between the different districts of London, he took 11 of the districts recommended in the Report of the Royal Commission and omitted six, adding five or six of his own. I would be much more satisfied than I am now to leave the rest of the areas of London to the Privy Council if, in addition to the areas now scheduled, the six stated by the Royal Commission to be ripe for municipal life were added. That would be a very great indication to the Commissioners in dividing up the remaining parts of London. I presume the Government have some idea in their own minds as to the manner in which the Privy Council should divide up the remaining areas, and I think it would very much facilitate the work of the Committee if at the present moment we could discuss the question of areas, which the right honourable Gentleman says is of great local interest. Having decided that, we should then be in a very much

better position to discuss the question of powers. I hope the right honourable Gentleman will even now reconsider whether the question of areas could not now be discussed.

***MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea)** said he could not see why the discussion on the Amendment should continue. There was an opinion on both sides that the First Schedule ought to include as many areas as possible, but on the other hand it was felt that it was impossible to avoid a Boundaries Commission. He should like to see co-operation on both sides on this question of areas. He himself was of opinion that both Bethnal Green and Shoreditch should be scheduled, but then he knew perfectly well that they had not only to consider the intrinsic claims of particular areas, but also the effect on adjoining districts of their inclusion in the First Schedule. That could only be done through the machinery of a Boundaries Commission. He thought that a great deal of the feeling shown by vestries arose from the indefiniteness of the powers to be given to the Privy Council, which had occasioned some confusion of thought and misapprehension. He should be very glad indeed if the right honourable Gentleman in charge of the Bill would state rather more explicitly than he had done that the Boundary Commissioners to be appointed by the Privy Council were to conduct local inquiries, at which local opinion would be freely heard and ascertained, and that the Report of the Commission would be based on those inquiries. If such a statement were made the misunderstanding now existing would be removed.

MR. STUART said he would wish to second the appeal of the honourable Gentleman for more information on the question. There was a strong desire on both sides to know better than they did at present the principle on which the division of London was to be carried out. There was indefiniteness not only with reference to the body to which that division was to be referred, but also in the character of the instructions to be given to it. The right honourable Gentleman stated that the 16 areas scheduled afforded an indication of the principle on which the division would be carried out, but he had looked through them and

had not been able to find it. They varied in area from 794 acres in Chelsea to nearly 10,000 acres in Wandsworth; in population from 70,000 to 80,000 in Chelsea to nearly 300,000 in Islington; and in rateable value from £600,000 in Lambeth to nearly £5,000,000 in Westminster. Consequently he altogether failed to detect in the Schedule any guidance. The right honourable Gentleman stated that sub-section (b) showed sufficiently the principle by which the Commissioners would be guided, but that sub-section only stated that the other areas should be dealt with within the limits that the scheduled areas were dealt with, and therefore afforded no additional information.

COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) said the Amendment really amounted to a proposal to leave out the reference clause, and would practically make the Bill unworkable.

MR. HALDANE said he agreed that a Boundary Commission was absolutely necessary, but what was asked for was more definite information and better safeguards as to what these areas were to be. It would be very convenient if the right honourable Gentleman in charge of the Bill would give the Committee some information as to the procedure before the Privy Council. Under the Act of 1888, when application was made to the Privy Council for a charter, an inquiry was held locally, before which the inhabitants of the district could appear and ensure such safeguards being taken as would prevent any injustice being done. It was really necessary for the adequate discussion of the distribution of power under the Bill that the Committee should know what the areas and bodies were to be.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The honourable and learned Gentleman's speech was somewhat inconsistent. He told the Committee that it was impossible to discuss the provisions of the Bill with regard to the powers of the new bodies until the Committee knew what they were to be, while he said at the beginning of his speech that it was impossible for the Committee to determine these bodies without inquiry. I am desirous of putting in the

First Schedule all the areas which can be proper units of local government, and with regard to the remainder the procedure I contemplate is a local inquiry held by competent persons, before whom any local authority concerned, or, indeed, any considerable body of ratepayers, could appear and ask for the determination of their case. I venture to say that, so far from being a body that should cause distrust among local authorities, it should inspire their confidence more than a Committee of this House, which could not thresh out the petitions of local authorities or aggrieved ratepayers. I desire that such cases should be heard, not before the House, who from the very nature of the inquiry are incapable of carrying it out, but before a body well qualified to do so, who will be bound by the directions given them to hear and adjudicate between the parties. I am confident that the Committee will see that the procedure suggested by the Government is the only rational procedure which they can adopt.

LORD E. FITZMAURICE (Wilts, Cricklade) said the statement of the First Lord of the Treasury had gone some way towards answering the objection that had been raised. There was one essential difference between the position which existed in regard to English counties in 1888 and that which existed to-day in the case of London. A Commission was appointed in 1888 because there were overlapping areas and there were no county councils in existence. Now, however, there was in London a County Council, and he greatly regretted that the Government had not shown greater confidence in the Council and entrusted them with the drawing up of a Provisional Order dealing with the London areas. The confusion in London concerning boundaries could not be compared with that which existed in the provincial districts. The London County Council were increasing their hold upon the goodwill and confidence of the ratepayers of the metropolis; they were thoroughly conversant with the areas of their county, and they, instead of the Committee of the Privy Council, should be entrusted with this question of boundaries.

MR. BOUSFIELD (Hackney, N.) said the district he represented, which included Stoke Newington, was so deeply affected by the Bill, and its opposition to the Government proposals was so strong that he should not be doing his duty if he did not take the earliest opportunity of stating how matters stood. The Amendment, vague as it was, had served a very useful purpose, and he wished to thank the Government for intimating that they were prepared to consider the case of any particular unit which could legitimately and properly claim to be a unit of local self-government, and which wished to be included in the Schedule. But this was not a mere question of boundaries, for in certain districts of London it was practically a question of local administrative life or death. He was anxious to know how the Government proposed to deal with those areas which were dissatisfied with the matter being left to the Boundary Commissioners and with the principles laid down for the guidance of the Commissioners, which, in some cases, would prevent that body arriving at a solution which would be favourable to the wishes of any one area. He did not think that a greater mistake could be made than to start these new institutions by overriding local feeling. At present there was no indication on the face of the Bill that the Boundary Commissioners were to have any regard to popular feeling. If an assurance were given that local feeling would be considered, and in some way or other put before the Boundary Commissioners, it would remove to a considerable extent some of the objections which had been put forward.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: This is hardly the place in the Bill at which to discuss this particular question, but of course local feeling must be taken into account. This is so ob-

vious a consideration that it never entered into my thoughts that local feeling would not be a factor in guiding the Commissioners on the question of the formation of boundaries.

MR. BOUSFIELD said he wished to thank the right honourable Gentleman for having allayed some of his doubts.

CAPTAIN NORTON said he should support the Amendment, because no principle had been laid down upon which the Commissioners should act. There should be some assurance that districts which had been declared to be fit for local self-government should be included. If they could get that assurance from the right honourable Gentleman it would greatly facilitate the passing of the Bill through Committee. There were areas with which he was closely connected which were more suited for local self-government than many of those which were included in the Schedule.

MR. BURDETT-COUTTS (Westminster) expressed the hope that the Amendment would be withdrawn after the statement of the right honourable Gentleman. He understood him to say that he had an open mind with regard to including other areas, but that he did not extend that principle to any modification or alteration of existing areas which were in the Schedule.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I have not said anything about that.

Question put—

"That the words of the clause to the word 'areas,' in line 14, stand part of the clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 180; Noes 114.—(Division List No. 98.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
Aird, John
Allhusen, Augustus Henry E.
Arnold, Alfred
Arrol, Sir William
Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Baird, John George Alexander
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r
Balfour, Rt. Hon. Gerald W. (Leeds)

Banbury, Frederick George
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Barry, Rt. Hon. A. H. Smith—(Hunts)
Bartley, George C. T.
Barton, Dunbar Plunket
Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Beckett, Ernest William
Bemrose, Sir Henry Howe
Beresford, Lord Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward

Boulnois, Edmund
Bousfield, William Robert
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, John George
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbyshire)
Cayzer, Sir Charles William
Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, East)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (Birm.)
Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r

Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Chelsea, Viscount
 Clare, Octavius Leigh
 Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
 Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
 Compton, Lord Alwyne
 Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Cooke, C. W. Radcliffe (Heref'd)
 Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
 Cranborne, Viscount
 Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Davenport, W. Bromley-
 Douglas, Rt. Hn. Akers-
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
 Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
 Elliot, Hn. A. Ralph Douglas
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fellows, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
 Fisher, William Hayes
 FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose-
 Flannery, Sir Fortescue
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Galloway, William Johnson
 Garfit, William
 Gedge, Sydney
 Gibbons, J. Lloyd
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Gilliat, John Saunders
 Godson, Sir Augustus Fred.
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hon. John Edward
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
 Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. George's)
 Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
 Goulding, Edward Alfred
 Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury)
 Gretton, John
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Hall, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord George
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hardy, Lawrence
 Heath, James

Heaton, John Henniker
 Hermon-Hodge, Rbt. Trotter
 Hill, Sir Edw. Stock (Bristol)
 Hoare, Edw. Brodie (Hampstead)
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Hobhouse, Henry
 Holland, Hon. Lionel R. (Bow)
 Hughes, Colonel Edwin
 Hutton, John (Yorks. N.R.)
 Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Kemp, George
 Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
 Kenyon, James
 Keswick, William
 Kimber, Henry
 Knowles, Lees
 Lafone, Alfred
 Lawrence, Sir E. Durning (Corn)
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
 Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
 Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Liverpool)
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lowles, John
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdonald, John Cumming
 Maclure, Sir John William
 McKillop, James
 Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
 Melville, Beresford Valentine
 Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Milton, Viscount
 Monk, Charles James
 Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
 More, Robert J. (Shropshire)
 Morgan, Hn. Fred. (Monm'tsh.)
 Mount, William George
 Muntz, Philip A.
 Murray, Charles J. (Coventry)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Myers, William Henry
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
 Percy, Earl
 Pierpoint, Robert

Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Pretymann, Ernest George
 Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
 Purvis, Robert
 Pym, C. Guy
 Renshaw, Charles Bine
 Richards, Henry Charles
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Cheltenham)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Ryder, John Herbert Dudley
 Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
 Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Spencer, Ernest
 Stanley, Henry M. (Lambeth)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stephens, Henry Charles
 Stewart, Sir Mark J. M. Taggart
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
 Stone, Sir Benjamin
 Strutt, Hon. Charles Hedley
 Sutherland, Sir Thomas
 Thorburn, Walter
 Tollemache, Henry James
 Valentia, Viscount
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of Wight)
 Wharton, Rt. Hn. John Lloyd
 Whitely, George (Stockport)
 Whitmore, Charles Algernon
 Williams, J. Powell. (Birm.)
 Wilson, John (Falkirk)
 Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks.)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
 Wylie, Alexander
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Sir William Walrand and
 Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Allen, William (Gateshead)
 Allen, W. (Newc.-under-Lyme)
 Asher, Alexander
 Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
 Bailey, James (Walworth)
 Baker, Sir John
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.)
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
 Billson, Alfred
 Bolton, Thomas Dolling
 Broadhurst, Henry
 Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
 Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
 Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
 Burt, Thomas
 Buxton, Sydney Charles
 Caldwell, James
 Cameron, Sir Charles (Glasgow)

Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
 Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson-
 Causton, Richard Knight
 Cawley, Frederick
 Channing, Francis Alliston
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Crombie, John William
 Dillon, John
 Donelan, Captain A.
 Dunn, Sir William
 Ellis, John Edward
 Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)
 Fenwick Charles
 Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Foster, Sir Walter (Derby C.)
 Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Gold, Charles

Gourley, Sir Edw. Temperley
 Griffith, Ellis J.
 Hayne, Rt. Hn. Charles Seale-
 Hedderwick, Thomas Chas. H.
 Hogan, James Francis
 Holden, Sir Angus
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
 Johnson-Ferguson, Jabez E.
 Jocey, Sir James
 Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
 Kinlock, Sir John G. Smyth
 Kitson, Sir James
 Lambert, George
 Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb'land)
 Leng, Sir John
 Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Lewis, Lohm Herbert
 Logan, John William

Lough, Thomas
 MacAleese, Daniel
 M'Arthur, William (Cornwall)
 M'Ghee, Richard
 M'Laren, Chas. Benjamin
 Mäden, John Henry
 Mappin, Sir Frederick Therpe
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
 Morley, Rt. Hn. John (Montrose)
 Moss, Samuel
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Norton, Capt. Cecil William
 Nussey, Thomas Willans
 O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
 O'Connor, Jas. (Wicklow, W.)
 O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
 Oldroyd, Mark
 Panton, James Mellor
 Phillippis, John Wynford
 Pickersgill, Edward Hare

Pirie, Duncan V.
 Power, Patrick Joseph
 Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
 Provand, A. D.
 Reid, Sir Robert Threshie
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Roberts, John H. (Denhighe.)
 Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
 Scott, Chas. Prestwick (Leigh)
 Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
 Soames, Arthur Wellesley
 Spicer, Albert
 Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
 Steadman, William Charles
 Strachey, Edward
 Stuart, James (Shoreditch)
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
 Tennant, Harold John
 Thomas, Alfred (Glamorgan, E)
 Thomas, David A. (Merthyr)

Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Wallace, Robert (Edinburgh)
 Wallace, Robert (Peeth)
 Wakton, John Lawson (Leeds, S.)
 Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Weir, James Galloway
 Whitaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams, John Carvall (Notts)
 Wilson, Fred. W. (Norfolk)
 Wilson, John (Govan)
 Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Huddersf'd.
 Woods, Samuel
 Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Sir C. Dilke and Mr.
 Haldane.

*CAPTAIN NORTON, in moving the Amendment, which provided that each of the new areas in London "shall correspond to an existing area of local administration in London," drew attention to the fact that his object was to preserve the existing areas of local government and of administration, and to avoid disruption and the formation of unmanageable areas, and to prevent the destruction of local life. He thought that the various vestries and district boards should form the new boroughs subject to the formation of new areas under this scheme. That was the policy which was followed by the Government after the Report of the Commission which sat in 1854 was issued. On the Report of that Commission the Government in 1855 formed 37 administrative local bodies in London, to which they gave nine-tenths of the duties appertaining to local government at that time. Since 1855 there had been great developments in local self-government, and as it had developed so fresh duties were imposed upon these local bodies. When it came to the case of London it was found necessary to have recourse not to the vestries and local bodies, but to the only central body then existing, the Metropolitan Board of Works.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: How does the honourable Gentleman connect his argument with the Amendment standing in his name?

*CAPTAIN NORTON said he was endeavouring to show that the duties which ought to have devolved upon the

vestries of London which it was found impossible to give them had been handed over to the Metropolitan Board of Works. And it was now proposed to set up similar bodies and take the duties which were vested in the County Council, the central London authority, away from them and hand them over to the new municipalities. He suggested that the existing areas in the majority of cases were sufficiently large and thoroughly competent to carry out the duties which would be imposed upon them exclusive of the wider and larger duties which could only be performed by a central body, and they ought to be real municipalities in the sense of the word. He was attempting to show the necessity for giving the new powers to existing areas instead of the larger areas. He was in entire agreement with a statement made by the Leader of the House in which he had said a larger district could not be superior to a small district because it completely destroyed local life. The great feeling upon the Bill was that it touched the question of the equalisation of rates, and it was only natural that each municipality should do all they could for the improvement of their own district. They would do nothing for the areas more remote from them; they would attempt to shirk their responsibility to the poor and would not attempt to do anything for the benefit of London at large. All the rich districts lying to the west have been included in the schedule, but all the poorer districts lying to the east and on the river side, with the exception of Poplar, were left to be dealt with by the Commission. If that were done it

would create cities of the rich and cities of the poor. The Tower Hamlets, if made into one area, would have a population of 1,000,000 who would be unable to take care of themselves. The new boroughs would not be boroughs in the true sense of the word, nor would they be such that the people living in them could take part in local life and have any control over those important matters which affect the health and life of the people. He wished to know on what principle Westminster was to form one of the new areas, when there were existing at the present time other areas, parishes, and vestries which were managing their own affairs sufficiently large and popular to be included in the schedule of the Bill, which were not included. The answer which they had received was that it was because of its historic associations. But there were many areas in London which had existed just as long and were equally historical. Westminster was never a borough in the true sense of the word. It had never a complete local life such as the borough of Newington had, the inhabitants of which had done more for London than Westminster had ever done. The essential difference between London and other great cities in the country was that in London there was a constant migration of working classes to the extent of some 33 per cent. per annum, whilst there was an addition to the population annually of some 50,000. It was impossible to get the people of London to take an interest in the government of London except as a whole outside existing well-known local areas.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said the object of his honourable Friend was to practically do away with the first Schedule, the effect of which was to draw a distinction, between some of the local government areas of London and others. His honourable Friend desired that there should be no such distinction.

*MR. LOWLES (Shoreditch, Haggerston) thought a good deal of discussion might be saved if the Government could see their way, in looking through the Amendments to the Schedule, to include some of the large and self-governing areas. He had every possible confidence that as in 1885, when the boundaries

were altered for Parliamentary purposes, so on this occasion, when the Commissioners came to deal with the areas under the Bill, they would show the same consideration for local feeling. At the same time he thought it would be advisable to extend the first Schedule so that it might include many boroughs which manifestly, both in regard to population and rateable value, came within the minimum laid down in the Bill, and were, therefore, entitled to be so included.

LORD HUGH CECIL (Greenwich) said he should like to say one word in order to press upon the Government not to concede too much to the advocates of particular interests on one side or the other. It was obvious that the principle underlying the Amendment in favour of smaller areas was really a contention in favour of smaller areas, more corresponding to existing local government areas. Certainly local interests ought not to be left out of sight. He thought it would be the greatest possible pity if the municipalities were not, generally speaking, constructed on a large scale. In the case of small municipalities there was a great danger in the direction of jobbery and corruption from which large municipalities were likely to be free. There was another matter that particularly applied to poorer parts of London, where there was only a limited supply of persons who had a natural capacity, or acquired the capacity, for local government. If, therefore, they had a larger number of councils, and broke up, especially the poorer parts of London, into a large number of areas, they would get people on the councils who would not make good councillors. He hoped that in the poorer parts of London especially every effort would be made to keep the municipalities as large as possible.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.) said he did not see why the supporters of the Amendment should not accept with gratitude and confidence the statement of the First Lord of the Treasury, which he thought would give all that was required.

*CAPTAIN NORTON said he had no desire to unduly press the Amendment. If the Leader of the House preferred to

take the discussion under sub-section (b) he was quite willing to allow the matter to drop.

Question put.

Amendment negatived.

On sub-section (b), which provides that every other borough than those mentioned in the previous sub-section shall, unless for special reasons stated in a Report which shall be laid before Parliament, have either a rateable value exceeding £500,000 or a population between 100,000 and 400,000—

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) moved an Amendment to the effect that every such borough should

“be formed with due regard to considerations of local feeling, and of historic development, weighed in conjunction with those of administrative convenience.”

He said it was felt that the Bill left far too much to outside authority. Although it might be necessary that certain powers shall be entrusted to a Commission in order to carry out the purpose of the Act, at the same time it had hitherto been the practice of Parliament to lay down clear principles and leave to the Commissioners only the duty of carrying them out. As the Bill stood there was absolutely no rule for the guidance of the Commissioners. It seemed to be thought that there was. As a matter of fact, under the Bill as it stood it would be quite possible for the Commissioners to make the whole of London which remained outside the boroughs into one area. He therefore proposed as an Amendment that each of the proposed areas should be formed with due regard to considerations of local feeling. It seemed to him that where they had an area in which for many years people had been working together in public life, and where public spirit had been to some extent developed, it would be very unwise to interfere with it. It was said that the object of the Bill was to encourage local patriotism. Well, surely where they found local patriotism—which, at best, was a plant of slow growth—it was policy to stimulate its growth and not rudely pluck it out by the roots. Again, there were many existing areas of local government

which were very compact, having the same area both for local government in the strict sense of the term and also for poor law purposes, but where the population was somewhat small. He thought that in many of these cases it was very desirable that these areas, although small, should continue to exist. The salutary effect of his Amendment would be to direct the Boundary Commissioners to have regard to local feeling in fixing areas.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: There has, no doubt, been so considerable a manifestation of feeling on both sides of the House that it may be desirable to give further instructions to the Commissioners, and to embody so far as possible in the Act itself, the general declaration of policy which I had the honour to make to the House a short time ago. But I do not like the actual words of the Amendment. The honourable Gentleman said he took them from the Report of the Commission, but they are hardly suitable for an Act of Parliament. I would suggest the substitution of these words for the words of the honourable Member—

“Every other borough shall be formed with due regard to efficiency of administration and local history and association.”

MR. PICKERSGILL accepted the suggestion of the First Lord of the Treasury.

The Amendment of the honourable Member was accordingly withdrawn, and the Amendment of the First Lord of the Treasury agreed to.

On the Return of the CHAIRMAN after the usual interval—

MR. LOUGH (Islington) moved as an Amendment—

“That in clause 1, page 1, line 22, to omit after the word ‘have’ the words ‘either a rateable value exceeding £500,000, or.’”

He desired to acknowledge the importance of the Amendment which had already been accepted by the right honourable Gentleman in charge of the Bill, but the only direction given to the Commissioners to be appointed under the Bill was that there was to be a rateable

value of £500,000 in each borough area, or a population limit of between 100,000 and 400,000. Now, the important word of these lines was the word "or." If either of these conditions existed, the area would be constituted into a single borough. He believed there were no lines in the Bill which had created so much alarm in London as those three lines with which his Amendment dealt, because under the provision as it stood the whole of the area of London outside the scheduled areas might be constituted a single borough. For that area would have a rateable value of more than £500,000. Now, what he thought should be in the Bill was a maximum and not a minimum limit of rateable value. Indeed, his conviction was that rateable value was not a proper condition at all in deciding whether an area should be constituted a borough. The provision as it now stood was too vague, and practically laid down no rule for the guidance of the Commissioners. As it stood, the words which he had quoted would prevent the Commission from creating an area into a borough which, but for the words, it would be desirable to create into a borough. The fault of the Bill in regard to that part, at any rate, was that it suggested to the Commissioners that they ought to create far too large areas into boroughs. That had been simply a terror to the existing local authorities in London.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: I suggest to the honourable Member that the question of rateable value should be made a separate question. The question of population can be dealt with by a subsequent Amendment.

MR. LOUGH said that was a very good suggestion, and he was quite willing to accept it.

*COLONEL HUGHES thought that the Committee should have a definition of what rateable value included.

MR. LOUGH asked as a point of order whether, if he adopted the suggestion to discuss first the rateable value as the basis of a borough area, that would prevent him from proposing his population limit?

Mr. Lough.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: The honourable Member wishes to exclude the question of rateable value altogether, and to make these borough areas depend on population. Rateable value is one question, and population limit is another question.

MR. LOUGH accepted the Chairman's suggestion to limit his present Amendment to rateable value, and to leave the population limit to subsequent debate. He thought it would be very difficult to give any reason for including rateable value in the Bill at all. It would only lead the Commissioners into difficulties. He moved the Amendment excluding rateable value.

MR. T. H. ROBERTSON (Hackney, S.) was personally very strongly in favour of large areas, and he believed that the majority of the inhabitants of East London were of the same opinion.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. T. H. ROBERTSON said that there were very few persons who had the knowledge of the wishes of the inhabitants of East London which he had, and it was his firm and positive belief that they desired large and important boroughs, although there might be a certain number of people in the vestries who had a contrary opinion. He had an Amendment leaving out "either," and to substitute "and" for "or," but he begged to withdraw it.

*MR. FLETCHER MOULTON (Cornwall, Launceston) suggested that there was some blunder either in the printing or the drafting of this clause. The first words "either rateable value of £500,000" left the Commissioners with only a minimum and with no maximum, so that they could go to any extent above a rateable value of £500,000. It was evident that this was not the intention of the clause, for in the latter part a population limit was introduced as an alternative, which gave, not only a minimum, but a maximum limit as to population. Now, it was too absurd that the clause should not put a maximum limit as to population, which could be got rid of at once by making a gigantic rateable area. What was intended was evidently one of two things—either that there must be both a rate-

able value of £500,000 and a population of between 100,000 and 400,000—which seemed to him the more probable—or that where there was not a population of 100,000, a rateable value of £500,000 should be sufficient to justify the constitution of a borough.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight) did not think that there could be any mistake in regard to the clause. The intention of the Government was quite clear, namely, that the area should have a rateable value of £500,000, or a population of from 100,000 to 400,000. The question now before the Committee was whether the words "either a rateable value exceeding £500,000" should be struck out, on the ground that there should be no rateable value. Now, rateable value went with population as a rule. The case of a very large area with a very small population and a very large rateable value was really an impossible case, at any rate, in London. Population went to a large extent with rateable value, and rateable value was good evidence and a good test of an area for the purposes of local government. The Government was not prepared to exercise the test of rateable value out of the Bill, and therefore they could not accept the Amendment. The Government were certainly in favour of large areas.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said that the point made by the honourable Member for Islington was absolutely clear. According to the sub-section, as it stood, the Commissioners would be at liberty to take either the test of rateable value or of population. In the case of population, there was a minimum and a maximum limit, but in the case of rateable value there was a minimum but no maximum; and accordingly, if the Commissioners selected the test of rateable value alone, they could put the whole of London outside the scheduled areas into one borough.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Not with population also.

MR. DILLON said that the point was as clear as could be. As the sub-section now stood, the Commissioners could constitute an area a borough if it had

"either a rateable value of £500,000, or a population between 100,000 and 400,000." Earlier in the Debate the right honourable Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean proposed that the principles on which these areas or districts were to be carved out should be laid down in the first clause of the Bill. He had listened to the right honourable Baronet's argument with interest, and was completely convinced that he was right. The First Lord of the Treasury pointed out that when they came down to sub-sections (a) and (b) of the first clause they would find the principles which were to guide the Commissioners, but when looked into it was found that the principles in these sub-sections were of the loosest possible description, and they practically left the Commissioners to carve out what areas they thought fit. He thought the honourable Member was entitled to demand from the Government, before they passed from this clause, some clear definition as to the powers of the Commissioners, and as to the character of the new boroughs to be established. A remark made by the right honourable the Attorney-General had aroused suspicion in his mind. The right honourable Gentleman said that the Government were more enamoured of large districts than small districts, and this clause was so drafted that it placed no limit to the size of the districts which the Commissioners may determine. He yielded to no one in his ignorance of the City, but he had always looked on that Bill as skilfully designed for the purpose of worrying the London County Council and discrediting its work. Therefore, if that were so, it was perfectly clear that the larger the areas of the new boroughs the better that purpose would be served. For the larger these new boroughs were, they would be the more likely to set themselves up in opposition to the London County Council, and to break up the administration of London into fragments. He believed that by this Bill it was intended to surround the London County Council with a ring of great municipalities which would be encouraged by the present Government to set themselves up in opposition to that body and to diminish its powers.

*MR. LOWLES said he had in his hand a Return of the whole scheduled areas in

London, and as a matter of fact there were only two cases in which the conditions laid down by the clause in the Bill did not apply; that was to say, as to the population being more than 100,000, and as to the rateable value of £500,000.

MR. BUXTON said he thought the Government must feel that the Committee wanted an explanation on this matter. If he understood the speech of the Attorney-General aright, the Bill did not carry out the intention of the Government. They naturally wanted to have this Bill drafted so that an ordinary person reading it would understand it rightly. As he understood the matter, it was not the intention of the Government that a very wide discretion should be given to the Commissioners, and that both rateable value and population would be restrictions on the Commissioners as to the areas which they would constitute boroughs. He did not think that anything could be worse in carrying out the principle on which the Bill was founded than in selecting for a borough a very large population with a little rateable value; and he thought the Commissioners ought to have specific instructions to consider rateable value as well as population.

Another Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 22, to leave out from the word 'have,' to the end of the clause, in order to add the words 'a population between one hundred thousand and four hundred thousand, or, if the population is less than one hundred thousand, a rateable value exceeding five hundred thousand pounds,'"—(*Mr. Balfour.*)—instead thereof.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I entirely agree that the words, grammatically construed, do not carry out the intention of the Government, and I therefore propose to amend the sub-section by substituting words which do carry out the intention of the Government, which my right honourable Friend the Attorney-General explained. As amended, the sub-section would read—

"Every other borough shall, unless for special reasons stated in a Report which shall be laid before Parliament, have a population of between 100,000 and 400,000, or, if the population is less than 100,000, then a rateable value exceeding £500,000."

Mr. Lowles.

That carries out with precision the intentions of the Government. If that can be put from the Chair, then the Amendment of the figures can be dealt with, the general form of words being accepted.

Question proposed—

"That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Question put, and negatived.

Question proposed—

"That those words be there inserted."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"To leave out the words 'between one hundred thousand and four hundred thousand,' in order to insert the words 'not exceeding three hundred thousand.'"—(*Mr. Stuart.*)

MR. STUART said he wanted to recall the Committee to an aspect of the question which had not been before them in the short discussions raised. The House has already adopted the suggestion of the Leader of the House that the Commissioners should pay attention to the local history and associations of the various areas. But he feared that the Commissioners would not be able to carry out these instructions if the clause stood as it was now put. There were 22 districts left out of the Schedule of the Bill. Now, many of these districts had a long historical life, and were really administrative units before the creation of Parliament itself. They were not really bad areas for local government purposes. But supposing the clause was carried as it now stood, there would be only six of these 22 areas which would stand as they now were as separate entities. He suggested, therefore, that the Commissioners should be more limited as to population area, and that that limit should be put not at 400,000, but at 300,000. There were, in fact, as he had said, only six areas with a population of more than 100,000—Bethnal Green, Hackney, Mile End, Newington, Shoreditch, and Greenwich. All the other districts had less than 100,000. But such a district as Bermondsey, which had a long history, had only a population of 85,000. He therefore thought that a latitude ought to be allowed to the Commissioners in this matter. Unless that were conceded, the

Commissioners would be driven to interfere with those areas other than the six he had mentioned, even if they were to have regard to the lowest limit, as for instance, in the case of St. Luke's, which would be transferred into another area which had no connection with its local associations.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said he took a totally different view from the honourable Member who had just spoken. He thought it would be a great pity to limit the clause to the maximum number. He did not want to see a great number of very small municipalities, which seemed to him to constitute the real danger of the whole improvement. There might also be difficulty in fixing a maximum. The clause, therefore, should read, "A population of not less than 100,000," leaving the maximum out altogether.

MR. BUXTON thought it would be better to put a maximum limit than a minimum one. If the limit of 100,000 were accepted, Whitechapel, for instance, which had a population of 78,000, would be left out. Whitechapel was a case in which it might very fairly be argued that it might be formed into an independent locality of itself. It had its own poor law union, which was very well administered; it had its own local associations, and its own local feeling; and he should regret to see their local life absorbed in that of a neighbouring borough. There were, to his mind, very good reasons to be advanced against any great amalgamation of poor districts. It was comparatively easy to administer municipalities when the work was entrusted to men of position and wealth, who kept their carriages, but in the East End, those who had to administer local affairs had to walk to their town hall or to the building where the administration of local government was carried on. If they were going to have large areas in the poor districts, there would be the physical difficulty which had unfortunately arisen as regarded many of the county councils throughout the country—namely, that those who were elected to represent the ratepayers were unable to carry out their duties efficiently.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Perhaps I may say one word in response to the argument and appeal made to the Government. I entirely agree that the one object should be to frame efficient units of local government, and the question may be discussed without the smallest tinge of Party feeling. When, however, I accepted a previous Amendment it was with the distinct wish that the limit in the latter part of the sub-section should be retained, and I should never have thought it possible to accept that Amendment if the inferior limit were going to be removed by a subsequent Amendment. The acceptance of that Amendment makes it necessary to retain the lower limit. If not, we should hand over the Commissioners helplessly to any view which may be expressed by the locality in favour of the existing area. That would be a great misfortune. I certainly think it most important to let the Commissioners understand that the limit of 100,000 is to stand unless very strong reasons can be alleged in a contrary direction. I do not deny that in some cases those strong reasons may exist, but, speaking broadly, I think it would be a great misfortune for the future of those new bodies if any considerable number of them are below the limit of 100,000 population. For these reasons, Sir, I should greatly regret if the Committee accepted the Amendment.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) said there were reasons against both the higher and the lower limit, and, in order, he would move that the consideration of this sub-section should be deferred until the Schedule had been considered. The lower limit was put in the Bill at 100,000. The Government had already admitted in the Schedule several areas below 100,000 population. Why should that limit apply to the whole of the rest of the area of London, so as to shut out from the consideration of the Boundary Commissioners cases which, in their view, might be legitimately considered? In this respect the case of Wandsworth, which he had the honour to represent, was peculiar. It had an area of 15 square miles—15 times the size of the City of London, and far larger than that of any of the proposed munici-

palities. The parishes which constituted that district had different opinions upon the subject, and they desired to lay them before the Government, and he asked the Committee not to prejudice the decision which might be come to. He was not going to say whether he was in favour of the district board as now constituted, or of separate municipalities. That was the question which divided his constituents, and he appealed to the Government to give them a fair hearing before this particular portion of the Bill was decided on. If he was in order, he would move that this sub-section be postponed for a week.

*COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) drew attention to the case of Plumstead, which, with a present population of 62,000, was increasing by 3,000 or 4,000 every year, and had an area of five square miles. He submitted that that extent of territory was quite enough for one council to look after, especially considering the rapid development of the district. He thought the law should be so framed as to ensure that those districts which had such immense possibilities for increase of population in the early future should not be placed within the 100,000 limit.

LORD E. FITZMAURICE: I cannot help thinking that a considerable number of the Members of the Committee will, by the time we have now arrived at, have been gradually brought round by the force of circumstances to feel that there is a great deal in what has just fallen from the honourable Member. We are going to appoint a Commission, or rather a Privy Council, under this Bill. We may assume that those Commissioners will be men of very great knowledge, experience, and judgment, and no doubt their names will be communicated to the Committee before these proceedings are terminated. The question, therefore, arises whether it would not be better to trust them altogether. If you once begin to try to lay down limits, be they maximum or minimum, you will be almost certain to get into difficulties. Surely the best plan would be to give the Commissioners a perfectly free hand in the matter.

Mr. Kimber.

MR. L. HOLLAND said he took the same view as the honourable Member for Islington. He thought a maximum limit of population was unnecessary.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: It would be very convenient for the Committee if they were to distinguish between the lower and the higher limit, because it is quite evident that an entirely different set of arguments apply to cases.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: I foresaw that, and all that I put to the Committee was that the word "between" stand part. If the Committee decide to accept he word "between" they can agree to discuss either the higher or the lower limit.

MR. HOLLAND said the question in his mind was whether it was not desirable to exclude the higher limit altogether, but inasmuch as the Government were prepared to consider the question he would leave the subject as it was.

MR. LOUGH said that the point which he desired to make was that they could not have respect to historic or local feeling unless the lower limit was removed. The right honourable Gentleman admitted that he was willing to deal with values, but without removing the lower limit that was impossible, and therefore he implored the right honourable Gentleman to consider the matter very carefully before he retained it in the Bill. If he maintained the lower limit he at once ruled out 16 areas of those 22 which appear in the first schedule of the Bill. And how could he have any regard to historic value if he ruled out those areas which had been the centres of local government for many years past. He would refer to the case of St. Giles, which the right honourable Gentleman desired to retain. It would be impossible to retain that unless the lower limit was removed. It was stated that its valuation was over £500,000, and that, therefore, it might be brought in, and it was also admitted that that was the gross valuation, and therefore did not count, and that the net valuation was only £400,000, and if those figures were admitted that area would have to be ruled out if the lower limit was retained. He thought that the Commissioners should be left a free hand to deal

with the various localities, having regard to the great increase of population which had taken place in many of them. But that was not possible so long as the lower limit was retained. He pointed out the union between Stoke Newington and Hackney, which appeared to be one of the most simple matters in the world to arrange, would not last 10 years; that domestic differences would arise, and in 10 years' time there would be another Bill brought in to separate them. The concession made by the right honourable Gentleman in the early part of the evening was completely abrogated if he would not consent to the Amendment now before the Committee, and he therefore asked him to sweep away the offending words.

MR. BOUSFIELD was of opinion that the position of affairs was materially altered by the extremely considerate

manner in which the Leader of the House had dealt with it. The words suggested in the sub-section went as far as right honourable Gentlemen had seen possible to go at present. Speaking on behalf of his constituents, who felt very strongly upon the subject, he was bound to say that unless the Government could see their way to modify the sub-section he would be bound to vote for the removal of the lower limit in this matter. He thought the lower limit ought to be removed, and that the matter ought to be left to the Boundary Commissioners, with any provision which might be thought necessary.

Question put—

“That the word ‘between’ stand part of the proposed Amendment.”

The Committee divided:—Ayes 184; Noes 101.—(Division List No. 99.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
Aird, John
Allhusen, Augustus Hy. E.
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. J. FitzRoy
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Rt. Hon. G. W. (Leeds)
Banbury, Frederick George
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Bartley, George C. T.
Barton, Dunbar Plunkett
Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. H. (Bris'l)
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Beresford, Lord Charles
Bethell, Commander
Bigwood, James
Bill, Charles
Bond, Edward
Boulnois, Edmund
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, John George
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
Cayzer, Sir Charles Wm.
Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, E.)
Chaloner, Capt. R. G. W.
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (Bir.)
Chamberlain, J. A. (Worc'r)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Chelsea, Viscount
Cochrane, Hn. T. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Colston, Chas. E. H. Athole
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Cook, Fred. L. (Lambeth)

Cooke, C. W. R. (Hereford)
Corbett, A. C. (Glasgow)
Cox, Irwin E. B. (Harrow)
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Curzon, Viscount
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, W. Bromley-
Denny, Colonel
Dickson-Poynder, Sir J. P.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Duncombe, Hn. Hubert V.
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fellows, Hon. Ailwyn E.
Field, Admiral (Eastbourne)
Finch, George H.
Finlay, Sir R. Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir R. Hayes
Fletcher, Sir Henry
Folkestone, Viscount
Gedge, Sydney
Gibbons, J. Lloyd
Giles, Charles Tyrrell
Gilliat, John Saunders
Godson, Sir Augustus Fred.
Goldsworthy, Major-General
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goschen, Rt. Hon. G. J. (St. Geo.)
Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Green, W. D. (Wendesbury)
Greene, Hy. D. (Shrewsbury)
Gretton, John
Gull, Sir Cameron
Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord G.
Hanson, Sir Reginald
Heath, James
Heaton, John Henniker

Hermion-Hodge, R. Trotter
Hill, Sir Ed. Stock (Bristol)
Hoare, E. Brodie (Hampstead)
Hobhouse, Henry
Holland, Hon. L. R. (Bow)
Howarth, Sir Henry Hoyle
Jackson, Rt. Hon. W. Lawies
Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
Jessel, Capt. H. Merton
Johnston, William (Belfast)
Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
Kemp, George
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Kenyon, James
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. William
Kewick, William
Kimber, Henry
Knowles, Lees
Lafone, Alfred
Lawrence, Sir E. D. (Corn.)
Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks)
Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald W. Erskine
Long, Rt. Hon. W. (Liverpool)
Lopes, Hy. Yarde Buller
Lorne, Marquess of
Lowe, Francis William
Lowles, John
Lucas-Shadwell, William
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Macartney, W. G. Ellison
Macdonald, John Cumming
Maclure, Sir John William
McKillop, James
Maxwell, Rt. Hon. Sir H. E.
Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
Milton, Viscount
Monk, Charles James
Morgan, Hn. Fred. (Mon.)
Mount, William George

Muntz, Philip A.
Murray, Rt. Hn. A. G. (Bute)
Murray, C. J. (Coventry)
Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
Myers, William Henry
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Parkes, Ebenezer
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pollock, Harry Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharpe
Pretymann, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy
Raach, Major Frederick Carne
Richards, Henry Charles
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson

Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Rothschild, Hon. Lionel W.
Round, James
Russell, Gen. F. S. (Chelt'm)
Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
Ryder, John H. Dudley
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
Seely, Charles Hilton
Sharpe, William Ed. T.
Sidebotham, J. W. (Chesh.)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, A. H. (Christchurch)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
Stephens, Henry Charles
Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Strauss, Arthur
Tollemache, Henry James

Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. H.
Warr, Augustus Frederick
Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
Webster, Sir R. E. (I. of Wight)
Whiteley, George (Stockport)
Whitmore, Chas. Algernon
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset)
Williams, J. Powell (Birm.)
Wilson, John (Falkirk)
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (Yorks)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Wylie, Alexander
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Sir William Walrond and
Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Asher, Alexander
Asquith, Rt. Hn. H. Henry
Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
Baker, Sir John
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. B. (Clack.)
Barlow, John Emmott
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
Billson, Alfred
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Bousfield, William Robert
Broadhurst, Henry
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Burns, John
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Sir C. (Glasgow)
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Clough, Walter Owen
Courtney, Rt. Hon. L. H.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Dunn, Sir William
Ellis, John Edward
Evans, S. T. (Glamorgan)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. M. (Leith)
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Foster, Sir W. (Derby Co.)
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. H. John

Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gourley, Sir Ed. Temperley
Griffith, Ellis J.
Haldane, Richard Burdon
Hayne, Rt. Hn. Chas. Seale-
Hedderwick, Thos. Chas. H.
Holden, Sir Angus
Horniman, Frederick John
Hughes, Colonel Edwin
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, Wm. (Carnarvonshire)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Lambert, George
Langley, Batty
Lawson, Sir W. (Cumberland)
Leng, Sir John
Leuty, Thomas Richmond
Lewis, John Herbert
Macaleese, Daniel
M'Arthur, Wm. (Cornwall)
M'Ghee, Richard
Maddison, Fred.
Maden, John Henry
Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
Morgan, J. L. (Carmarthen)
Morley, Chas. (Breckshire)
Moulton, John Fletcher
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
Oldroyd, Mark
Palmer, Geo. Wm. (Reading)
Paulton, James Mellor
Philipps, John Wynford

Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Power, Patrick Joseph
Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, J. Bryn (Eifion)
Roberts, J. H. (Denbighs.)
Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick, B.)
Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarsh.)
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spicer, Albert
Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
Steadman, William Charles
Strachey, Edward
Sullivan, Donald (Westmeath)
Thomas, D. A. (Merthyr)
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Walton, J. (Leeds, S.)
Walton, Joseph Barnsley
Warner, T. Courtenay T.
Wedderburn, Sir William
Weir, James Galloway
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams, J. Carvell (Notts.)
Wilson, Fred. W. (Norfolk)
Wilson, John (Govan)
Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Hud.)
Woods, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Mr. James Stuart and Mr.
Lough.

Another Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"To leave out the words 'one hundred thousand,' in order to insert the words 'fifty thousand,' instead thereof."—(Mr. Bousfield.)

MR. BOUSFIELD asked the Government to meet them half way in the matter. If the Government would not give full discretion to the Commissioners he appealed to the

Government to accept the lower limit of 50,000, in order to widen their discretion. He did not suggest 50,000 as the best size. There was not any best size; what they wanted was variety. He was perfectly in agreement that it was desirable to have large areas, such as Greater Westminster, provided they were created with the goodwill of the people it was proposed to include. He submitted to the Committee that there was

no reason why greater latitude should not be allowed. They did not want to reduce every district to the same level. There was no reason why they should cut all these new municipalities to the same pattern. If the limit were reduced to 50,000 it would give the Commissioners latitude to have regard for local feelings and historic associations. He quite admitted it would be undesirable to flood London with small areas of local government, but there was no reason why the lower limit of 50,000 should not be fixed, which would enable such districts as Stoke Newington and Plumstead to be included.

Question put—

“That ‘100,000’ stand part of the proposed Amendment.”

MR. SOAMES (Norfolk, S.) said if the Amendment were not carried several districts would be omitted and a large amount of grouping would be necessary. In many cases it would be necessary to group five or six districts in order to bring the population up to the higher limit. It was undesirable to get rid of the possibility of having variety in the formation of the new municipalities.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I hope my honourable Friend and the honourable Gentleman opposite will not persist in their Amendment. If we reduce the limit to 50,000 undoubtedly the Commissioners will think themselves directed to preserve every existing locality which reaches that population. That I think would be a great detriment. On the other hand, if we leave the limit at 100,000, and if there are any special reasons why a lower limit ought to be adopted the Commissioners are perfectly at liberty to adopt it. But we ought to place the limit of 100,000 in the Bill in order to show the Commissioners what under ordinary circumstances, and unless there are special reasons to the contrary, should be the minimum they ought to aim at in framing these new municipalities. I am convinced that the Committee will feel that we should really be

stultifying ourselves if, after having accepted an Amendment requiring the Commissioners to look to the history and associations of any locality, we should then introduce a population limit of 50,000 to indicate what the idea was at which the Commissioners should aim.

MR. LOUGH: One reason in support of the Amendment was that 50,000 was the limit of county boroughs outside London under the Local Government Act, and one of the great objects of the Bill was to assimilate the London boroughs to the outside boroughs. If the Amendment were not adopted the hands of the Commissioners would unfortunately be tied.

MR. BOUSFIELD: I recognise the difficulty mentioned by the First Lord of the Treasury that the Amendment might be taken as an indication of size, though it need not necessarily be so. He had another Amendment which he had not the opportunity of putting on the Paper, but which, if in order now, he should like to move. Seeing the difficulty surrounding the Amendment and the manner in which it was suggested it might be construed by the Commissioners, he did not wish to put it to a Division. But there was another way of meeting the point, and that was to add to the end of the clause the following words:—

“Or be an existing sanitary district constituted by Act of Parliament within 10 years before the passing of the Act.”

He did not want to make a 50,000 population the pattern throughout London, and if the right honourable Gentleman would consider the alternative he had suggested, he would ask leave to withdraw his Amendment.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Question put—

“That ‘100,000’ stand part of the proposed Amendment.”

The Committee divided:—Ayes 188; Noes 95.—(Division List No. 100.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
 Allhusen, Augustus Hy. E.
 Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
 Arrol, Sir William
 Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
 Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
 Bagot, Capt. J. FitzRoy
 Bailey, James (Walworth)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
 Banbury, Frederick George
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Barton, Dunbar Plunkett
 Bathurst, Hn. Alan Benjamin
 Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bris'l)
 Beckett, Ernest William
 Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
 Beresford, Lord Charles
 Bethell, Commander
 Bigwood, James
 Bill, Charles
 Bond, Edward
 Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
 Boulnois, Edmund
 Brodrick, Rt. Hn. St. John
 Burdett-Coutts, W.
 Butcher, John George
 Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
 Cayzer, Sir Charles Wm.
 Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, E.)
 Cecil, Lord H. (Greenwich)
 Chaloner, Capt. R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Bir.)
 Chamberlain, J. A. (Worc'r)
 Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Chelsea, Viscount
 Cochrane, Hn. T. H. A. E.
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
 Compton, Lord Alwyne
 Cook, Fred. L. (Lambeth)
 Cooke, C. W. R. (Hereford)
 Corbett, A. C. (Glasgow)
 Courtney, Rt. Hn. Leonard H.
 Cox, Irwin E. B. (Harow)
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
 Cubitt, Hon. Henry
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Davenport, W. Bromley-
 Denny, Colonel
 Dickson-Poynder, Sir J. P.
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers
 Duncombe, Hn. Hubert V.
 Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn E.
 Field, Admiral (Eastbourne)
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir R. Bannatyne
 Fisher, William Hayes

FitzGerald, Sir R. Hayes
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Gedge, Sydney
 Gibbons, J. Lloyd
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Gilliat, John Saunders
 Godson, Sir Augustus Fred.
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir J. Eldon
 Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. Geo.)
 Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
 Goulding, Edward Alfred
 Green, W. D. (Wednesbury)
 Greene, Hy. D. (Shrewsbury)
 Grettton, John
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Gunter, Colonel
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord G.
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hare, Tomas Leigh
 Heath, James
 Heaton, John Henniker
 Hermon-Hodge, R. Trotter
 Hill, Sir Ed. Stock (Bristol)
 Hoare, E. Brodie (Hampstead)
 Hobhouse, Henry
 Holland, Hon. L. R. (Bow)
 Howarth, Sir Henry Hoyle
 Jackson, Rt. Hn. W. Lawies
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jessel, Capt. H. Merton
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Kemp, George
 Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir J. H.
 Kenyon, James
 Kenyon-Slaney, Col. William
 Keawick, William
 Kimber, Henry
 Knowles, Lees
 Lafone, Alfred
 Lawrence, Sir E. D. (Corn.)
 Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks)
 Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Long, Col. C. W. (Evesham)
 Long, Rt. Hn. W. (Liverpool)
 Lopes, Hy. Yarde Buller
 Lorne, Marquess of
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowles, John
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdonald, John Cumming
 Maclure, Sir John William
 McKillop, James
 Marks, Henry Hananel
 Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Milton, Viscount
 Monk, Charles James
 Montagu, Hn. J. S. (Hants.)
 More, Robt. J. (Shropshire)

Morgan, Hn. Fred. (Mon.)
 Mount, William George
 Muntz, Philip A.
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. G. (Bute)
 Murray, C. J. (Coventry)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Myers, William Henry
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hon. Sir H. Staff.
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
 Parkes, Ebenezer
 Percy, Earl
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Pollock, Harry Frederick
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Pretzman, Ernest George
 Pryce-Jones, Lt. Col. Edwd.
 Purvis, Robert
 Pym, C. Guy
 Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
 Richards, Henry Charles
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
 Round, James
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Chelt'hm.)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Ryder, John Herbert Dudley
 Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
 Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Skewes-Cox, Thomas
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stephens, Henry Charles
 Stewart, Sir Mark J. M. Taggart
 Strauss, Arthur
 Tollemache, Henry James
 Valentia, Viscount
 Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of W.)
 Whiteley, George (Stockport)
 Whitmore, Charles Algernon
 Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
 Williams, Jos. Powell (Birm.)
 Wilson, John (Falkirk)
 Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks.)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
 Wylie, Alexander
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Asher, Alexander
 Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herb. Henry
 Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
 Baker, Sir John
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.)

Barlow, John Emmott
 Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
 Billson, Alfred
 Bolton, Thomas Dolling
 Broadhurst, Henry

Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
 Burns, John
 Burt, Thomas
 Buxton, Sydney Charles
 Caldwell, James

Cameron, Sir Chas. (Glasgow)
 Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
 Causton, Richard Knight
 Cawley, Frederick
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Cohen, Benjamin Lewis
 Dilke, Rt. Hn. Sir Charles
 Dillon, John
 Duckworth, James
 Dunn, Sir William
 Ellis, John Edward
 Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)
 Fenwick, Charles
 Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmund
 Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
 Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herb. Jno.
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Griffiths, Ellis J.
 Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Herderwick, Thos. Chas. H.
 Holden, Sir Angus
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Hughes, Colonel Edwin
 Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
 Joicey, Sir James
 Jones, Wm. (Carnarvonshire)
 Kearley, Hudson E.

Lambert, George
 Langley, Batty
 Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb'd.)
 Leng, Sir John
 Lewis, John Herbert
 Lough, Thomas
 MacAleese, Daniel
 M'Arthur, Wm. (Cornwall)
 M'Ghee, Richard
 Maddison, Fred.
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
 Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
 Morley, Chas. (Breckshire)
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Norton, Capt. Cecil Wm.
 Nussey, Thomas Willans
 O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
 Oldroyd, Mark
 Palmer, Geo. Wm. (Reading)
 Paulton, James Mellor
 Philipps, John Wynford
 Pickersgill, Edward Hare
 Power, Patrick Joseph
 Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
 Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
 Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)

Schwann, Charles E.
 Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
 Sinclair, Capt. Jno. (Forfarsh.)
 Smith, Samuel (Flint)
 Spicer, Albert
 Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
 Steadman, William Charles
 Strachey, Edward
 Stuart, James (Shoreditch)
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
 Thomas, David Alf. (Merthyr)
 Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Walton, Jno. Lawson (Leeds, S)
 Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
 Warner, Thos. Courtenay T.
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Weir, James Galloway
 Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams, Jno. Carvell (Notts.)
 Wilson, Fredk. W. (Norfolk)
 Wilson, John (Govan)
 Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Hud'fd.)
 Woods, Samuel
 Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Bousfield and M
 Soames.

Another Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"To leave out the words 'four hundred thousand,' in order to insert the words 'three hundred thousand,' instead thereof."—(*Mr. Lough.*)

Mr. LOUGH said now that the Committee had disposed of the question of the minimum he hoped the Government would give favourable consideration to his proposal that 300,000 inhabitants, and not 400,000 as proposed in the Amendment, should be the maximum. He did not think it necessary to repeat the arguments he had already used, but hoped the right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury would recognise that 300,000 would be sufficiently large, especially in view of the fact that there was only one borough in London with a population of more than 300,000. There could be no good local government in London unless the area was such that the members of the governing body could become familiar with it, and he thought 300,000 a sufficient maximum to insert in this Bill.

Mr. L. R. HOLLAND expressed the hope that the Government would see their way to change the limit, but not in the direction suggested by the honourable Member for Islington. He hoped it would be possible to change the maximum to 500,000, because, if the

limit of 400,000 was retained, it would be impossible, however much the Commissioners might desire it, to create a borough of the Tower Hamlets. When they reached the Schedule it ought to be open to the Committee either to include the Tower Hamlets, or to leave it to the Commissioners to decide whether it would be advisable to form the Tower Hamlets into one borough. It was only in regard to population that the Tower Hamlets exceeded the limits of the Bill; its rateable value was less than half the rateable value of Westminster, and was equal to that of several of the districts mentioned in the Bill. It might be possible that many of the different districts in the Tower Hamlets would prefer to stand by themselves and be created separate boroughs, but the decision already arrived at in regard to population would make it impossible for Limehouse and Whitechapel to be separated. If amalgamation was to take place it would be better to create in the East End of London a district which could balance the greatness and the dignity of the borough of Westminster in the West End of London. For the sake of unity of assessment and of valuation, and in order to secure unity of rating over as large an area as possible, it was, he thought, advisable that the discretion he had suggested should be left to the Commissioners.

MR. MARKS (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) supported the suggestion that the maximum should be raised to 500,000. He did not desire to prejudge the case of the Tower Hamlets, which could be discussed at a later stage, but there were many points in favour of making the Tower Hamlets into one borough. There were natural associations, strong sympathies between the various divisions of the district, and a strong feeling in favour of the Tower Hamlets being constituted a borough.

MR. STUART trusted that the right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury would be willing to accept the Motion to reduce the maximum population from 400,000 to 300,000. The reason why he supported 300,000 as the upper limit was that it was well above the population of the largest of the existing divisions—namely, that of Hackney.

MR. STEADMAN (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) hoped when the time came he should be able to convince the First Lord of the Treasury that the borough of Mile End had a sufficient claim to be made a municipality. Of the 90 members on the Mile End Vestry, 60 were supporters of the present Government, and that vestry had unanimously passed a resolution in favour of this proposal. There were various reasons against making the whole of the Tower Hamlets one municipality, one of which was the question of rates, and therefore, on this occasion he should support the Government.

LORD HUGH CECIL said, in support of what fell from his honourable Friend the Member from Bromley, that nowhere was local government more unsatisfactory than it was over large parts of East London, and nowhere did they hope the new municipalities might be more productive of reform and benefit. For example, philanthropic persons often engaged in what was called a Sanitary Committee in that part of London, with

the object of putting pressure on the local authorities to execute the law. The very fact that it was necessary for persons coming from other parts to engage in a voluntary organisation to secure the operation of the law, indicated how much room there was for reform. He believed it would be of real advantage to the East End of London to set up the largest municipality possible. No one would say that an area with 500,000 population would be of unmanageable size; it was a reasonable figure to make a municipality really independent and efficient, and not so large as to be cumbersome and unworkable.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Avowedly the proposal to change the figure is in the interest of one particular scheme, proposed by my honourable Friend the Member for Bow and Bromley, and supported by my noble Friend, for a large municipality in the East End of London, and as to that I am far from saying it is impracticable or inexpedient, but as it is an isolated scheme it does not appear to me to be desirable at the present stage of the proceedings to alter the figure in the Bill. My honourable Friend implied that if the figure were left unaltered the Committee would be precluded from taking the step, should it seem good to them, to set up a larger Tower Hamlets, but in that he is mistaken; it would be just as easy in discussing the Schedule, and I am unwilling to prejudge the question or make an alteration that might be unnecessary in view of subsequent debate at a later stage. Even apart from the Schedule it will be in the power of the Commissioners, if they are as convinced as my honourable Friend as to the expediency of establishing a large municipality, to frame a scheme for the purpose and give special reasons. On this ground I would suggest to the House that we should not alter the superior limit at the present stage any more than we have altered the inferior limit, but leave it for subsequent discussion.

MR. BURNS (Battersea) said that the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich appeared to be under the impression that the mere fact of grouping five or six parishes into one large municipality would necessarily bring about better administration. He did not agree with the noble Lord. There were some large parishes in London with a population of 200,000 and 300,000 where the sanitary laws were less efficiently administered than in parishes with 50,000. Good administration depended on the zeal of the officers, and on the care of the men elected on the local bodies, and not merely on the size of the district. It was all very well for the Member for Bow and Bromley, where rates were about 8s. 7d. in the £, to suggest amalgamation with parishes where the rates were only 7s.

MR. L. R. HOLLAND: I always thought the Member for Battersea was one of the advocates for equalisation of rates throughout London.

MR. BURNS replied that this was so, but that the worst way to get real equalisation of rates was to take very poor parishes in the East End of London and group them with other parishes worse off than themselves and leave the greater question of metropolitan equalisation untouched. The suggestion of the honourable Member was a meretricious form of equalisation which was not in keeping with the high sounding principles which the honourable Member had expressed. He (Mr. Burns) was a Moderate man, and on this occasion supported the Government. He would urge

all honourable Members on this side of the House to support the First Lord of the Treasury, and reject the dangerous and insidious proposal of the honourable Member for Bow and Bromley.

Question put—

"That the words 'four hundred thousand' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

Motion agreed to without a Division.

Another Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"To leave out the words 'or, if the population is less than one hundred thousand, a rateable value exceeding five hundred thousand pounds.'—(Mr. Pickersgill.)

MR. PICKERSGILL said the proposal as it stood would operate very unequally as between rich districts and poor districts, and that a very mischievous result might follow. He strongly deprecated the creation of small rich districts which might result from the adoption of the Amendment as it stood.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: In introducing rateable value as one of the conditions to be taken with population for determining local areas, the Government are only following the common tradition. It is a most familiar method of arriving at the proper districts for dealing with local affairs. I do not think there are any small districts with a very large rateable value.

Question. put—

"That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 200; Noes 83.—(Division List No. 101.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Balcarras, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch.)

Balfour, Rt. Hon. Gerald W. (Leeds)
Banbury, Frederick George
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Bartley, George C. T.
Barton, Dunbar Plunkett
Bathurst, Hn. Allen Benjamin
Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Beckett, Ernest William

Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Beresford, Lord Charles
Bethell, Commander
Bhownaggee, Sir M. M.
Bigwood, James
Bill, Charles
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith

Boulnois, Edmund
 Bousfield, William Robert
 Brassey, Albert
 Brodrick, Rt. Hn. St. John
 Burdett-Coutts, W.
 Butcher, John George
 Carlile, William Walter
 Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lanes.)
 Cayzer, Sir Charles William
 Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, E.)
 Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
 Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
 Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc.)
 Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Chelsea, Viscount
 Cochran, Hn. Thos. H.A.E.
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
 Compton, Lord Alwyne
 Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Cooke, C. W. Radcliffe (Here'fd)
 Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
 Cox, Irwin Edw. B. (Harrow)
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
 Cubitt, Hon. Henry
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Davenport, W. Bromley
 Denny, Colonel
 Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers-
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
 Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fellowes, Hn. Ailwyn Edward
 Field, Admiral (Eastbourne)
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
 Fisher, William Hayes
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Forster, Henry William
 Galloway, William Johnson
 Gedge, Sydney
 Gibbons, J. Lloyd
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
 Goldsworth, Major-General
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir Jno. Eldon
 Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. George's)
 Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
 Goulding, Edward Alfred
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Green, Walford D. (Wednes'by.)
 Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury)
 Gretton, John
 Gull, Sir Cameron

Gunter, Colonel
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord George
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Heath, James
 Heaton, John Henniker
 Henderson, Alexander
 Herman-Hodge, Robt. Trotter
 Hill, Sir Edwd. Stock (Bristol)
 Hoare, Edw. Brodie (Hampstd.)
 Hobhouse, Henry
 Holland, Hn. Lionel R. (Bow)
 Houston, R. P.
 Howell, William Tudor
 Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
 Hughes, Colonel Edwin
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
 Jolliffe, Hn. H. George
 Kemp, George
 Kenyon, James
 Kenyon-Slaney, Col. Wm.
 Keswick, William
 Kimber, Henry
 Knowles, Lees
 Lafone, Alfred
 Lawrence, Sir E. Durning- (Corn.)
 Lawrence, Wm. F. (Liverpool)
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks)
 Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Long, Col. C. W. (Evesham)
 Long, Rt. Hn. W. (L'pool)
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lorne, Marquess of
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowles, John
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdona, John Cumming
 Maclure, Sir John William
 McKillop, James
 Marks, Henry Hananel
 Martin, Richard Biddulph
 Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.
 Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
 Middlemore, Jno. Throgmorton
 Milton, Viscount
 Milward, Colonel Victor
 Monckton, Edward Philip
 Monk, Charles James
 Montagu, Hn. J. Scott (Hants.)
 More, Robt. Jasper (Shropshire)
 Morgan, Hn. Fred. (Monm'sh.)
 Morton, Arth. H. A. (Deptford)
 Mount, William George
 Muntz, Philip A.
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. Graham (Bute)
 Murray, Chas. J. (Coventry)

Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Myers, William Henry
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donal Ninian
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
 Parkes, Ebenezer
 Penn, John
 Percy, Earl
 Pilkington, Richard
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Plollock, Harry Frederick
 Pretymann, Ernest George
 Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edwd.
 Purvis, Robert
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Richards, Henry Charles
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
 Round, James
 Roys, Clement Molyneux
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrona)
 Ryder, John Herbert Dudley
 Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
 Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, Wm. Edward T.
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Skewes-Cox, Thomas
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stephens, Henry Charles
 Stewart, Sir Mark J. M. Taggart
 Strauss, Arthur
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Ox. Univ.)
 Tollemache, Henry James
 Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray
 Valentia, Viscount
 Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
 Warde, Lt.-Col. C. E. (Kent)
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of W.)
 Whitmore, Charles Algernon
 Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
 Williams, Jos. Powell (Birm.)
 Wilson, John (Falkirk)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
 Wylie, Alexander
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Yerburch, Robert Armstrong

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Sir William Walrod and
 Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Asher, Alexander
 Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herb. Henry
 Baker, Sir John
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.)
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Billson, Alfred
 Birrell, Augustine
 Broadhurst, Henry

Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
 Burns, John
 Burt, Thomas
 Buxton, Sydney Charles
 Caldwell, James
 Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
 Causton, Richard Knight
 Cawley, Frederick

Clough, Walter Owen
 Colville, John
 Courtney, Rt. Hn. Leonard H.
 Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Duckworth, James
 Ellis, John Edward
 Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)
 Fenwick, Charles

Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
 Gladstone, Rt. Hon. Herb. Jno.
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Grey, Sir Edward (Berwick)
 Griffith, Ellis J.
 Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
 Hedderwick, Thos. Chas. H.
 Holden, Sir Angus
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
 Joicey, Sir James
 Jones, Wm. (Carnarvonshire)
 Kearley, Hudson E.
 Lambert, George
 Langley, Batty
 Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb'ld.)
 Leng, Sir John
 Lewis, John Herbert
 Lough, Thomas
 Macaleese, Daniel

M'Arthur, Wm. (Cornwall)
 M'Ghee, Richard
 M'Hugh, Patrick A. (Leitrim)
 Maddison, Fred.
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
 Morley, Charles (Breckonshire)
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Norton, Capt. Cecil William
 Nussey, Thomas Willans
 Oldroyd, Mark
 Paulton, James Mellor
 Philipps, John Wynford
 Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
 Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
 Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
 Schwann, Charles E.
 Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
 Sinclair, Capt. John (Forfarsh.)
 Soames, Arthur Wellesley

Spicer, Albert
 Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
 Steadman, William Charles
 Strachey, Edward
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
 Thomas, David Alf. (Merthyr)
 Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Walton, Jno. Lawson (Leeds, S.)
 Warner, Thos. Courtenay T.
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Weir, James Galloway
 Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams, Jno. Carvell (Notts.)
 Wilson, Fredk. W. (Norfolk)
 Wilson, John (Govan)
 Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Hud'fd.)
 Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Pickersgill and Mr.
 James Stuart.

Words added.

Question proposed—

"That clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Amendment proposed—

"Clause 1, page 1, line 25, at end, add—
 'Where it is proposed by an Order under this section to alter one of the areas mentioned in the First Schedule to this Act by detaching from such area any part thereof of which the population according to the last published census exceeds 20,000, in such case before any such Order is made the draft of the Order shall be laid before each House of Parliament for not less than 30 days on which that House is sitting, and if either of those Houses before the expiration of those 30 days presents an address to Her Majesty against the draft or any part thereof, no further proceedings shall be taken thereon, without prejudice to the making of any new draft Order.'—(Sir C. Dilke.)"

*SIR C. DILKE said his Amendment was not a fighting Amendment, but one which he had put down for the purpose of eliciting the views of Her Majesty's Government upon this question. There were two districts in London which were divided by a considerable distance. These two were the Strand district, which the Government dealt with in the creation of the greater borough of Westminster, and the other was the parish of Chelsea. In Chelsea, vestry offices had been erected at a great cost in one part of the parish and a large library in another, and if the district was to be

divided as indicated between two other parishes there would be very serious financial arrangements to be made for the purpose of that division, and it was very difficult to know what would be the fate either of the library or of the municipal offices. There were several legal difficulties involved. He asked that great care should be taken with regard to these financial adjustments, and that the matter should be brought in some way to the attention of Parliament. It was for this reason that he had put down the Motion.

*MR. WHITMORE expressed the hope that every care would be taken by the right honourable Gentleman to prevent any injustice to the division he represented—namely, Chelsea.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am quite conscious of the difficulty and the importance of the question brought before the Committee by the right honourable Baronet. I hope the provisions will be adequate to meet them, but I am perfectly ready to carefully consider any suggestions which may be made to me.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. LOUGH said he thought it desirable that, before the clause was passed, the Committee should see on the

Paper the important Amendment imported into it by the Government.

And, it being Midnight, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee Report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday.

TOWN COUNCILS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to a Select Committee.

ANCHORS AND CHAIN CABLES BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

BUSINESS DEFERRED.

SUPERANNUATION (METROPOLIS) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday 30th May.

LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 12th May.

TRUCK ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday 11th May.

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

MIDWIVES BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [12th April] further adjourned till Monday next.

SHOPS BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [1st February] further adjourned till Monday next.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT (1896) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading adjourned till Monday 15th May.

JUSTICES' DISQUALIFICATION REPEAL (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday 10th May.

SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Consideration, as amended, deferred till this day.

COLONIAL LOANS FUND BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

CORONERS' INQUESTS (RAILWAY FATALITIES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

House adjourned at five minutes after Twelve of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 26th April 1899.

MR. SPEAKER took the Chair at Twelve of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

MIDLAND AND SOUTH WESTERN
JUNCTION RAILWAY BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (MONEY)
BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

PETITIONS.

BOROUGH FUNDS ACT, 1872.

Petitions for alteration of Law;—From Merthyr Tydvil; Littleborough; and, Nelson; to lie upon the Table.

ECCLESIASTICAL ASSESSMENTS (SCOT-
LAND) BILL.

Petition from Kirkcaldy, against; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Wakefield, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

VOL. LXX. [FOURTH SERIES.]

GROCCERS' LICENCES (SCOTLAND)
ABOLITION BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Scottish Temperance League; and, Saltcoats; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOT-
LAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Lochee Road; Dundee; Ayr; Glasgow (four); Saltcoats; Fauldhouse; Gardenstown; Cupar Angus; Barrhead; Auchterarder; Renton; Lochans; Dumbarton; Grangemouth; Chirnside; and, Kilmarnock (two); to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SERVANTS'
SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Workington; and, Godstone; to lie upon the Table.

MIDWIVES BILL.

Petition from the West of Scotland, against; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Darton; Birley No. 1; Ryhill Main; Swanwick; Tibshelf No. 1; Emley; Deepcar; Watergate; Linnysham; Beighton; Eckington; Dewsbury Moor; Clay Cross; Heanor; and, Aspatria Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE
(SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Royal and Parliamentary Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS AMENDMENT
BILL.

Petition from Nottingham, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Birmingham; Barnsley; Darlington; Kingston on Hull; Leamside; Scarborough; Portsmouth; Chester; Leeds; Deptford; Newport (Mon.); Blaenavon; Abergavenny; Sheffield; and, Halifax; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment;—From Huntly; Inverness; St. Andrews; and, Fraserburgh; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Platt Bridge; Weymouth; Wigan; Thetford; Croydon (two); and, South Norwood; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS TO CHILDREN.

Petition from Nelson, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Renfrew, against; to lie upon the Table.

SMALL HOUSES (ACQUISITION OF OWNERSHIP) BILL.

Petition from Renfrew, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

TEINDS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Royal Parliamentary and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

TEMPERANCE REFORM (THREEFOLD OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From West Kilbride; Haddington; and, Abercorn; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

MINES AND QUARIES.

Copy presented,—of General Report and Statistics for the year 1898, Part I. (District Statistics), Statistics of the Persons employed, Output, and Accidents at Mines and Quarries in the United Kingdom, arranged according to the Inspection Districts (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

CERTIFIED INEBRIATES REFORMATORIES.

Copy presented,—of Regulations for the management of the Duxhurst Inebriate Reformatory (by Act); to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented,—of Fourth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented,—of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2232 and 2233 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS SERIES).

Copy presented,—of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Miscellaneous Series, No. 502 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

TENURE OF DWELLING-HOUSES ABROAD (COMMERCIAL, No. 3, 1899).

Copy presented,—of Reports by Her Majesty's Representatives Abroad upon the system of Tenure of Dwelling-houses in the countries in which they reside (in continuation of Commercial, No. 36, 1884) by Command); to lie upon the Table.

FIRE BRIGADES.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and report as to the existing arrangements for the provisions of Fire Brigades (including both staff and appliances) in England and Wales, excepting the Metropolitan Fire Brigade; the adequacy of such arrangements for the due protection of life and property from destruction or injury from fire; and the amendments, if any, which are necessary or desirable in the Law on the subject.—(*Mr. Pym.*)

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP D).

Sir Joseph Pease reported from the Committee on Group D of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Friday, at Twelve of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

Second Report from the Select Committee, with Minutes of Evidence, brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 169.]

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Third Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ECCLESIASTICAL ASSESSMENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Order for the Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed—
"That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. GORDON (Elgin and Nairn), in moving the Second Reading of the Bill, said his remarks would be strictly limited to the subject matter of the Bill, which was purely a rating question, and it was his

intention to avoid altogether referring to Scottish ecclesiastical questions, however tempting such matters might be to all Scottish politicians. His first reason for so doing was, that weeks ago he learned there was a Welsh question on the Paper as second Order, and he was in hopes that the Scottish Ecclesiastical Assessments Bill might be disposed of this afternoon in time to allow their Welsh friends to have an opportunity. His second reason was, that this was purely a question of rating, and he might possibly be transgressing the Orders of the House in discussing the more interesting questions which agitated rival parties in Scotland. This was no new question in the purview of Parliament. Last year he had the honour to introduce a Bill which did not get further than its preliminary stage, but the records of Parliament were very distinct on the subject. In 1868, he thought, the representative of the Government of the day tried to deal with the question of the assessments of manse and churches in Scotland. In 1876, again, the Government brought in a Bill to deal with the matter. He might, therefore, argue that after two Governments had approached this question with a view to settlement, he was, as a private Member, not transgressing Parliamentary etiquette or introducing a new subject. He was glad, further, to say that this was no Party question. All who remembered Scottish politics 30 years ago must recollect that there was no more stalwart and persistent Radical than Mr. Duncan M'Laren, Member for Edinburgh, and he introduced a Bill in that House in 1876 with the title, "A Bill to Abolish Church Rates in Scotland." The Bill which he (Mr. Gordon) had the honour to introduce to-day was practically a Bill to abolish the smaller class of church rates throughout Scotland. In 1884 the right honourable Member for the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen, in conjunction with the right honourable Baronet the Member for Ipswich, introduced a Bill on the same subject, and in 1886 the present Solicitor-General, along with Mr. Peter MacLagan, the well-known Liberal Member for Linlithgowshire, introduced a Bill on the same subject. In 1887 another similar Bill was introduced by his

honourable Friend the Member for the Stewartry, in conjunction with the right honourable Member for the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen. Therefore it seemed to him that the question was ripe for settlement. This grievance, which they all acknowledged, and which they heard of more particularly at election times, was by no means an old grievance as the life of nations went, nor was it inherent in the financial constitution of the Church of Scotland. It had arisen since Scotland became a wealthier country than it used to be. The old law, which put a charge on the land values of Scotland for the building of new churches and manse, went on almost unbroken in its policy from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, until unfortunately the courts interfered in 1802. The House of Lords in a well-known case connected with the burgh of Peterhead he believed, introduced the view that not only was land liable in such charges, but that the increased value of houses, cottages, or factories built on the land became chargeable for such purposes. The grievance, however, was not a burning one until Parliament passed the Valuation Bill in 1854, when the valuation rolls were drawn up in such a way as to catch the small feu, and make him for the first time chargeable for the payments towards churches and houses. The Party to which he belonged had a very clean record in regard to this grievance, for no sooner had the grievance reached a head than in 1868, as he had mentioned, and subsequently, it made persistent efforts to deal with it. There was no complaint by the owners of land that they were wrongly chargeable for this purpose. Modern churches were protected as to their accumulated funds by our more modern and kindly legislation, which affected churches and trusts of all characters. But a Church which came down from the Reformation period naturally had enemies, and the Governments of the day, and he might say the democratic spirit of Scotland also, found it necessary to protect for the Church any of its property which was left in the hands of landowners, who in some cases possibly had not been over-scrupulous in the methods by which they acquired it. The value of land was then practically the entire value of

all property in Scotland, but now the value was less than one-sixth of the entire value of property, and the heritors in Scotland who owned large or moderate estates had never raised any agitation against what was, of course, their legal obligation. They had inherited or purchased their property subject to this contribution to National Church purposes, but the law courts in 1802 interfered with what was called the valued rent or fixed statute for ecclesiastical purposes, and introduced the modern phrase, "real rent." It was this real rent, or at least a portion of it, that he attacked to-day. He believed if the Church were there to speak for itself it would say that it agreed with him. The Church had no wish to raise a penny of revenue, even though the Valuation Act of 1854 might legally entitle them to do so, from persons upon whom morally they had no claim. The people of Scotland, whether the present system was continued, or whether reconstruction was carried out, would always, he hoped, use well the ecclesiastical inheritance of the past. It was against the new misuse of assessment that this Bill was levelled. He hoped the House would assent to it, and accept the subtraction of £20 from every man's valuation, whether large or small, and thus, of course, absolve the small sum from any future exactions. But personally he would like to see this Bill considered one step to a larger policy, which he was sure the Church would assent to, by which all assessments as against the real modern value, or, as he believed, false value, would be cancelled, and by which the claim for Church purposes would lie only against the old valued rent of our forefathers. The churches which were kept up in this way were not all the churches belonging to the Established Church of Scotland, but merely the heritors' churches, the older parish churches numbering somewhere about 900. There were some hundreds of other churches which modern conditions and voluntary gifts had raised throughout the country to meet the increasing demands of an enlarged population, but these old churches were still the cause of irritation to all ratepayers, whether Unionist or Radical. Those ratepayers had expressed themselves to him through the President of the Convention of Royal

Burghs, and he yesterday had the honour to present to the House a petition signed by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh on behalf of that Convention in favour of the Bill. He failed to see who was against such a proposal. Radicals like Mr. Duncan M'Laren and all local Radicals were against these assessments. The small heritor who had assumed the liability of the landlord, and who was perhaps once in 20 years served with a notice to pay 1s. 6d. or 2s. 6d., or in some of the larger parishes as little as 3d., was naturally irritated by the want of system. No notice was at present required, but under the Bill notice would in future have to be given. The Bill provided that where the older heritors under the old valued system met, it should no longer be in the power of any one cantankerous man, or corporation, or company to throw this burden, with its irritating consequences, on the smaller feuars, the majority who in most cases would be responsible. Heritors on a considerable scale, who were prepared to meet the whole of the burden, would be able to silence this one man and prevent these assessments from reaching the small feuair. Difficulty often arose from the fact that these irritating exactions might be levelled against other churches, schools, and mansees. This Bill would cancel that, and in future the £20 exemption would refer to the rich as well as to the poor man, and would come into operation as soon as the Kirk session had certified to the proper authority that they had put themselves into this fund. Any man who knew Scottish life, and how the people there valued their church privileges, would say that there would never be the remotest difficulty in making up the deficiency, and so saving the small feuair. Honourable Gentlemen opposite, he saw by indications in the Press, were inclined to adopt the argument, not that this was too large a Measure, but the alternate criticism with which they were all so familiar in the House, that it did not go far enough. His own feeling was that vaulting ambition in Party tactics and in legislation very often landed them on the wrong side. In this dull world they had to take a more modest view, and walk step by step. He was confident this was a step in the right direction which might be carried later on even

further. He commended this Bill to the House on behalf of the ratepayers of Scotland, on behalf of those who, for many years past, since the grievance arose in public life, had been calling upon them on both sides of the House to vote for Measures and not for men.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir Charles Cameron.*)

*SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, Bridgeton) said he had listened with great interest to the plausible manner in which the honourable Gentleman had presented this Bill to the House. He said it was no Party question, and that Mr. Duncan M'Laren brought in a Bill for the abolition of these Church rates long ago. Mr. Duncan M'Laren did so, but he brought in a real Bill to abolish compulsory Church rates in Scotland, and the Conservative Party opposed the Measure year after year. The Bill of the honourable Member for Glasgow University was a limited one, but it too was a real Bill. But his honourable Friend opposite brought in a Bill by which an assessment was to be levied and then taken off certain people, if in the meantime the Kirk session could raise voluntarily a sum necessary to pay the deficit. It was a mere farce and a sham. There never had been the smallest disguise that the object of the Bill was to do away with the friction and ill-will created by sales which had occurred in connection with the levying of these assessments. In bringing forward his Bill the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Glasgow University illustrated this by reference to the Meldrum case. There the assessment was levied on 156 feuars. Fourteen who refused to pay had their homes sold up, and among the articles was a hearse, a fact which showed that even an undertaker could have conscientious objections to maintaining an Established Church. The honourable Member for Elgin and Nairn, in moving his Bill, said some churches had been allowed to fall into disrepair in order to avoid such scenes, but surely the proper course was that those who used the churches should keep them in repair, as was the case in every other religious community. The honourable Member had said that the

Church had no desire to receive one penny from unwilling persons, however strong her legal claim might be. That was very inconsistent with the action taken in a recent case which had attracted considerable attention in Stirlingshire—the Dennyloan case. He would give a few incidents in that case to show what the present system really was, and how little the Bill before the House would do to amend it. In July of 1892 Mr. Falconer, the parish minister, died, and the Rev. Alexander M'Gregor, who was appointed his successor, at once made application for repairs at his manse. The architect of the heritors said that £500 was necessary. The heritors grumbled because a manse that was big enough for the old minister should not be deemed good enough for his young successor, but an assessment was levied of 5d. in the pound. An indignation meeting was held, and resolutions against the assessment were passed. Notices were sent out. Many paid, and some did not. One of the latter was a certain G. M. Blain, a member of the United Presbyterian Church, whose assessment came to 5s. 10d. and the expenses to 19s. 6d. A sewing machine was seized and sold by auction at the market cross for 16s. What would have been the case of that person under the Bill? The same assessment would be served and the same thing would have happened unless £200 or £300 had been voluntarily raised so as to admit of the £20 deduction. That showed the Bill would in this case have effected nothing that could not equally well have been effected without it. The next case was that of the farmer's widow, Mrs. Mary Russell. At the time the summons was served at her house for 27s. 6d. assessment and £2 expenses she was lying in Glasgow Infirmary suffering from a broken leg. No one sent her the summons, and decree was given against her in her absence by the sheriff of Stirling. To satisfy her debt a sofa and three stuff-bottomed chairs were sold by public auction for £2 0s. 11½d., and there would have been a further sale but for the fact that a kind-hearted person in Edinburgh had paid the balance of the money. Had this Bill been the law the widow's assessment would have been £46 instead of £66, but the proceedings and the scandal would have

just been the same. Another individual refused to pay. Mr. Kerr, minister of the Dennyloanhead United Presbyterian Church, was assessed and had a notice served upon him, but when he replied that he had no objection to be served with a summons no further action was taken against him—probably because he was the United Presbyterian minister. It was true that under this Bill he would be exempt, but as he had not paid when called upon he would really gain no benefit. He might mention another case at Greenock, where he himself was a pretty big heritor. Repairs were demanded, and there was a talk of levying an assessment. After an indignation meeting had been held nothing more was heard of the assessment. He of course, benefited, because he had to pay nothing; but if the Bill passed, and sufficient money were raised to cut down the assessment on the first £20, he would fare a great deal worse than he then did. The Bill proposed to exempt the churches, burial grounds, schools, etc., belonging to the dissenting churches from any assessment. Probably the assessments on these were so small that their abolition would make no perceptible difference, consequently the bribe was not worth having. But the exemption was proposed, not because of justice or expediency, but because it was feared to expose the Established Church to support the manifest injustice of assessing the poor United Presbyterian and Free Church ministers to provide, comparatively speaking, palatial mansions for their Established Church brethren. The Member for West Renfrew had in his constituency a man who had built a village in which he was training the waifs and strays of Scotland to be honest men and useful citizens. His buildings were assessed at £2,000 a year, and under this Bill he would be "rouped" for non-payment of his rates, because he would certainly be a conscientious objector. The facts he had given proved that the Measure before the House was an absolute sham. Mr. Campbell's Bill contained a clause that before proceeding to assessment security must be given to make good any deficiency, but that clause did not appear in the present Measure, and it was that clause which made the other Bill a reality. Turning to the metaphysical aspect of the question—for no Scotch

Debate would be complete without such a consideration—he objected to the Bill on the ground that it was a gross infraction of the Treaty of Union by modifying the rights of the people in connection with the Established Church of Scotland, which that treaty guaranteed should stand for ever and ever. Equal with the right of turbary, or with the right of way or of light, was the right known in Scottish phraseology as the right of bottom-room, the right of every heritor paying rates to a seat in the parish church. In every country a favourite method of impressing technical facts on the brains of those concerned was to turn them into rhyme. For instance, there were the Board of Trade lines—

“Green to green and red to red,
Perfect safety—go ahead.”

And it might lighten the labours of the Speaker and help Members through the intricacies of Parliamentary procedure if their rules were also made to rhyme. He had jotted down, as an example, the following—

“Objection taken after twelve
The best ‘backed’ Bill will serve to shelve;
Addresses and Reports, Supply,
This first-class rule can still defy.”

One legal poet in Scotland had written on “The Battle of the Bottom Rooms.” He was not quite sure whether it was the present Lord Advocate—

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): I have not heard any expressions yet of which I would be anxious to be the author.

*SIR C. CAMERON said that on reflection he believed the author of the poem to which he had referred was the honourable Gentleman’s immediate predecessor in the office of Solicitor-General. The poem dealt with the case of *Stiven versus the Heritors of Kirriemuir*, heard in the First Division on 13th November 1878. In consequence of alterations in the church it was found that there was not a sufficient number of seats for the heritors—

“They couldna a’ get in, ’twas clear,
But what tho’ some maun bide awa’,
They had the richt the Word to hear,
And Scotsmen lo’e their richts ‘bune a’.”

Among the heritors one objected to the change, and the poem proceeded—

“The allocation syne began,
According to an auld decree.
But up and cries this angry man,
‘Na, faith I’ll gie the lairds a plea.
‘I’d rather gang nae mair to kirk,
And risk auld Nick’s eternal fumes,
Than yield to this unlawful wark
O’ conjunct richts in bottom rooms.’

The Lords replied—‘What’s that to us?
Ye seem, indeed, a cankered chiel.
The auld kirk stands, and while it does
The auld decree maun stand as weel.
‘Mak’ the best of that, my friend;
And when ye find a sitting toom,
Think mair upon yer latter end,
And less upon yer bottom room.’”

No man was more popular in Scotland than the honourable Member for Ross-shire, who, over a dispute with regard to a sitting in the Hampstead Presbyterian Church, had either excommunicated the church or the church had excommunicated him, and who had consequently earned for himself the honoured title of the Hampstead Martyr. The former Bill proposed to exclude the large towns, but this Measure included them. In the Barony Parish of Glasgow there were over 5,000 feuars. The deduction of £20 from every assessment meant over £400 for every 1d. in the pound, so that with a rate of 2½d. £1,000 would have to be voluntarily subscribed before the small people would have the benefit of the Bill. Surely that showed what an absolute farce it was. Yet if the Bill passed, and the small people were relieved from payment, they would lose their constitutional right to a seat in the church. In fact, they were asked to sell their birthright for 2d. or 6d. or 2s. 6d., and they might on a subsequent assessment find they would have to pay even that and be minus their seats. As a practical Measure, the Bill was absurd. It was self-contradictory, and as an effort in constitutionalism it went contrary to every doctrine held by the great constitutional Party.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.) said he based his opposition to the Bill on two main principles. The first was, that it was contrary to the principle of the Amendment carried in the House in 1884, and supported by the late Lord Advocate of Scotland. The Amendment declared that no Measure would be satisfactory for

Scotland which proposed to continue any system of compulsory assessment. Again, he submitted that if the Bill passed it would, so far from ending the strife and dissension which unhappily prevailed, increase the acerbity of the existing controversy. He believed, rightly or wrongly, in the maintenance of the principle of the religious equality. Over two-thirds of the population of Scotland were in favour of that principle, and therefore they offered the most strenuous objection to the Bill. The object of the Bill was clearly to strengthen the Establishment, and that was why they were in duty bound to oppose it. As long as Establishment lasted there would be no cessation of attempts on the part of honourable Members opposite to strengthen it. Well, they on the other side of the House would, with equal activity, bring pressure to bear to oppose such attempts. They held very strongly that all ecclesiastical assessments were an injustice, and that that injustice was emphasised since 1868 from the fact that Church rates in England were no longer compulsory, but voluntary. He was aware that an attempt might be made to prove that Church rates in England and Church assessments in Scotland were in no way connected; but he held that they were practically identical in principle, and if, owing to popular feeling and dissatisfaction, the injustice of Church rates was removed in England, so the agitation would continue in Scotland until the injustice of Church assessments was removed there. Moreover, the Bill was absolutely illogical even to a layman's mind. It did not even accomplish its professed object. It was given out that the small feuars would be relieved from their rates. If all small feuars were relieved from their rates they might take another view of the question; but the fact was very far indeed from that. There was no certainty at all that those whom the Bill professed to relieve would get relief. In two different clauses the relief was contingent on various eventualities. How could honourable Members opposite pretend that it was logical to grant relief to a certain class and not to another class? What was right for one should be right for all, and what was wrong for one was wrong for all. Under clause 3 a certain class of feuars were exempt, but the exemption was only contingent on

the vote of a majority in value of the proprietors liable to contribute according to valued rent. There was another contingency. By clause 5, section 2, the exemption of the small heritors and feuars was contingent on the vote of the Kirk Session, which was to take upon itself the burden of making up the deficiency. That very fact would not induce the members of the Kirk Session to give a vote which would increase the burdens on their own selves. Both these cases illustrated the usual character of the Bills which emanated from the other side of the House—a taking away with one hand what they give with the other; and it was as much for that as for any other reason that they opposed the Measure. There was one very important admission to which attention ought to be drawn, because it might come in useful in future legislation which he hoped would be brought in from his own side of the House. That admission was that the Established Church proposed to exempt, on certain conditions, from assessment all feuars at and under £20. That was an admission of the right of Parliament to relieve owners of property from liability to ecclesiastical assessments on lands and tenements. That being the case, if ever afterwards a proposal was made on that side of the House in the interests of justice, to emancipate all heritors and feuars from this Church assessment, by disestablishment and otherwise, he failed to see how it would be possible in consistency for honourable Members, after having brought in this Bill, to oppose such a proposition from this side of the House. He would ask the House to remember that on a future occasion, in the sincere hope that before long a Bill dealing with the question of disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland would be introduced. Let it never be said again that the character of the burden now imposed on lands and heritages for behoof of the Established Church could ever be called inalienable either logically or consistently. His next objection to the Bill was that the results which would be carried out and the wording of the Bill were at variance. Under clause 6, it was provided that nothing in the Act should have the effect of increasing or altering the liabilities of the heritors and ratepayers. The honourable Baronet the Member for Bridge-

ton had already pointed out how the liabilities of certain classes would be increased, and therefore the professed object of the Bill and the wording of the Bill were diametrically opposed. If the feuars were exempted under clause 3 there would be a great deficiency to be made up, and that deficiency would fall with increased proportion on the remaining heritors. Then, in the case where the heritors themselves were not exempt, but where churches, manse, and glebes were exempt, the deficiency had to be made up again, and there must be increased burdens on the heritors. A further injustice would therefore be done to the small feuars and heritors. These had at present a right to sit and vote at the heritors' meetings in virtue of being assessed on their real rent; but the Bill deprived them of that right even before their exemption from assessment had been decided upon. Another objection he had was that the practical means for carrying out the professed objects of the Bill were absolutely inadequate and unfair. In regard to summoning the meetings which were to decide who were to be exempted and who were not, the provision in clause 4 did not meet the necessities of the case. The small heritors were the class less likely to see newspaper advertisements, especially in the rural districts, and it was important that each of them should receive a circular summoning the meeting whether their number was 40 or 100. In spite of the objections which he had stated, he held that the mere introduction of the Bill would serve a useful purpose, because it committed honourable Members opposite to the principle that the burden on the heritors and feuars in Scotland was unjust, and ought to be alleviated. Power was given by the Bill to heritors who were liable to assessment on valued rent to exempt heritors who would be liable to assessment on real rent, and therefore the whole principle on which the Established Church founded its claim to ecclesiastical assessments was given away; and, therefore, now it was only a question of expediency how far Parliament could go in carrying that out to its logical conclusion. It would be idle in future for honourable Members opposite to bring forward any argument against disestablishment if they really supported such a Measure as this. Further, if they wished to be consistent,

it would be absolutely impossible for them to hold that churches, manse, and glebes should be relieved of assessment on the ground that these belonged to those who were not in the Established Church, when a large body of the feuars and heritors, who also were not members of the Church of Scotland, were not relieved from assessments. Surely, in logic, what applied to the one must apply to the other. If this Bill came into law it would, in his opinion, mark a distinctly retrogressive step in the history of religious controversy. He did not believe that the opinion of Scotland was in any way in favour of it. On the contrary, the opinion in Scotland was growing rapidly against ecclesiastical assessments. The instances which the honourable Baronet the Member for Bridgeton had given to the House showed very clearly the absurdity, the illegality, and the injustice of the present system. He had some cuttings giving other instances which almost passed belief of the iniquitous and cruel way in which these assessments were made for all sorts and manner of purposes. At Crieff, for instance, an assessment was made to meet the expenses of a dinner given on the ordination of the minister of the parish in September last. One of the heritors objected to that assessment, and offered to pay one pound out of his own pocket in order to meet the expense of the dinner.

MR. SPEAKER: This seems very remote from the question of the assessment for the repair of churches or manse.

MR. PIRIE said that, so far as he could understand, that was one of the purposes for which these assessments could be raised. Take another case no less extraordinary, where an assessment was imposed for raising money for a Gaelic church for men who did not understand a word of Gaelic. In that case a gentleman was threatened with *cessio bonorum* if he did not pay the rate for the Gaelic church. In other words, unless he paid that Church tax he was to be made a bankrupt. It would surely be unjust, supposing the assessments were to be levied for the erection of a Roman Catholic chapel, and why should it be more just if the assessments were levied for a Gaelic church connected with the

Established Church? It was high time that these abuses should cease. Opinion in Scotland against them was largely growing. A public meeting was lately held in Largs, presided over by a gentleman who was three times Provost of the town, and who had suffered severely on account of his conscientious objections to these Church assessments. At that meeting a resolution was passed to the effect that the law in regard to Church assessments was unsatisfactory and unjust, that it was a violation of the principle of religious equality, and that as the payment of Church rates had been abolished in England, it was unreasonable that Church and manse rates should continue to be levied in Scotland. He did not speak there as a Free Churchman or a United Presbyterian, but—being an Episcopalian—simply as a Dissenter in Scotland. His desire was that religious strife should cease, and this Bill would not bring that about. The question could be only settled in one way, and that was by the direct voice of the people of Scotland. The Scottish people could not consent to legislation on which the large majority of their representatives were not agreed. Until this question of religious establishment could be settled by the direct vote of the Scottish people alone, it would never reach finality. It was impossible to obtain such a vote in that House. In the meantime he held that aggressive legislation ought to cease, and this Bill was distinctly aggressive. Disestablishers were content to maintain their own views, and to remain in passive resistance, hoping that the time would come in which he believed a growing feeling and desire for union would extend. He deplored some of the statements which had been made by men of very high position as to the proposed union of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The honourable Member seems to be going beyond the scope of the Bill. The fact that all the inhabitants of Scotland did not belong to the Established Church of Scotland may be a material question in dealing with the Bill, but the honourable Member cannot argue the case of disestablishment.

MR. PIRIE said he was not arguing in favour of disestablishment. What he
Mr. Pirie.

was going to show was that the proposed union of the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches would have a very lasting striking effect on the relations of all the churches in Scotland.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The honourable Member is doing exactly what I just now ruled out of order.

MR. PIRIE said he bowed to Mr. Speaker's ruling. He looked forward to the time when these discussions would cease in Scotland, and he hoped that that would be more rapidly brought about by the Bill being thrown out. He had, therefore, much pleasure in seconding the rejection of the Bill.

*MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrew's Burghs) said that the hon. and gallant Member, with a candour which he admired, in seconding the Motion for the rejection of the Bill, had frankly told the House that he did so because he himself was an advocate of disestablishment, and he supposed of disendowment also, and was not prepared to assent to any legislation which would have the effect of strengthening the position of the Established Church of Scotland. He intended to be equally frank to the House. He did not hesitate to say that it was because he was, and had been for many years, keenly interested in the fortunes of the Church of Scotland, and numbered many warm friends among both its ministers and members, that he supported the Second Reading of the Bill, in the hope that it might do something to alleviate a grievance which all admitted. He thought the House was indebted to his honourable Friend for the extremely lucid manner in which he had stated his case in favour of the Second Reading of the Bill. The honourable Baronet, in moving its rejection, intending to pay his honourable Friend a compliment, said that his statements were plausible. He should not have taken that as a compliment himself, but it appeared to him that his honourable friend's statements were concise, accurate, and eminently to the point. If he supported the Second Reading of the Bill, it was because he believed that his honourable Friend, and those associated with him in this matter, had found a remedy which would go far to alleviate an established grievance. The honourable Baronet who moved the rejection of the Bill had occupied a large

part of his speech by bringing forward what he considered grotesque instances in which ecclesiastical assessments fell hardly. But he omitted to tell the House—and in this he was somewhat plausible—that there were thousands of feuars coming under the £20 valuation who would be capable of being relieved by the Bill, and who, in all probability, so far as those who watched the interests of the Church on this matter were able to judge, would be relieved, if the powers were given to the Kirk Session suggested under clause 5. The honourable Baronet referred to a clause in a former Bill introduced by the right honourable Member for the Glasgow University, and made it a ground of complaint that that clause was not in the present Bill. If the honourable Baronet was so enamoured of that clause, let him give his assent to the Second Reading of this Bill, and on Committee stage move the insertion of that clause, and he believed his honourable Friend in charge of the Bill would not look unfavourably upon it. The honourable and gallant Member who seconded the rejection of the Bill objected to clause 6 as imposing an additional assessment. No doubt the proposed exemption of churches, manses, buildings, and pertinents of dissenting churches would impose, but only in an infinitesimal ratio, an additional burden on the remaining heritors. But if the honourable and gallant Gentleman did not like clause 6, or if he said that it was inconsistent with the previous provisions of the Bill, let him in Committee move the deletion of clause 6, and his honourable Friend will give the Amendment his favourable consideration. On the question of increased assessment he had made a calculation, and found that in the case of a simple rural parish the additional assessment to be imposed by the exemption named only amounted to the difference between guineas and sovereigns. It had been made a matter of great complaint at election times that the manses and churches of other religious bodies were assessed for these purposes, while the churches and manses of the Established Church were exempt. He admitted up to a certain point the contention of the opponents of this Measure, although they were also the opponents of ecclesiastical assessments, that the feuar dissenter had not the same interest in the Church of

Scotland as the members of the Church of Scotland themselves, but he did not entirely admit that the feuar dissenters had no interest in the Church of Scotland at all. As a citizen the dissenter had, or ought to have, an interest in the Church, because there were rites of the Church which were sacred in their essence but civil in their effect, which were open to members of any or of no denomination throughout the length and breadth of Scotland, and adherence to these rites ought to be a matter of interest to every good citizen in the community. There was a provision in the Bill which was a very valuable one, of which sufficient notice had not been taken, and which the honourable Member for Aberdeen did not seem clearly to understand. In the third clause it was provided that a majority of the heritors in a parish should have power to determine whether assessment for the feuar should continue on the valued rent. That was a very wise provision, because there was always the possibility of one single heritor in the parish throwing down this apple of discord amongst the community of the parish and raising up that very strife which they were most anxious to avoid. Under clause 13 there was to a certain extent a recognition of the voluntary principle. He supposed that on the other side of the House there must be some members of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches of Scotland, and they knew as a matter of history that for a number of years these two Churches had been endeavouring to unite on a voluntary basis, although for reasons best known to themselves, and which they did not always publicly state, they had hitherto been unable to arrive at an agreement. Those who looked upon the Disruption fathers as their predecessors in Church matters would no doubt bear in mind that they went out protesting that they adhered to Establishment principles. It was a vitiated Establishment, as they thought, but they asserted their willingness to return to an Establishment purified from what they regarded as the taint of patronage. Unfortunately a considerable majority of their successors had entirely abandoned that position, and now frankly founded themselves on the basis of disestablishment and disendowment and the voluntary principle. In the third clause

there was a suggestion of voluntary concurrence amongst the heritors in any parish to continue to assess on the valued rent. There was also the suggestion of voluntary contribution through or by means of the Kirk Session, which would give effect to the relief under the £20 valuation. If they in a modified degree endeavoured to follow in their footsteps, surely it ought not to be made a matter of condemnation, but rather a matter of commendation. He thought he could put the issue between them almost in three sentences. The Party opposite asserted that there was a grievance in this matter of assessment for ecclesiastical purposes. The Unionist party admitted that grievance and declared their readiness to alleviate it. They on their side claimed that they had found a remedy which would go a long way to remedy that grievance. They did not pretend that it was universal, or that it was entirely logical, but it would be far-reaching, and it certainly was practical. They came to that House, many of them associated very closely with the Church of Scotland, and asked that House and Parliament to assent to a proposal which they believed would remove a grievance which was admitted by both sides of the House, and here they found themselves at issue with honourable Members opposite. Members opposite, apparently, were not prepared that they should reform that which they believed to be worthy of reform, because they looked upon any Measure of this kind as an outwork against disestablishment and disendowment which the Party opposite desired, but which the Unionist Party resisted. He did not desire to disturb the slumber of sleeping dogs, and least of all that of the dog in the manger. The simile had been so often dragged into the Debate that he thought it might now be left alone. It had been used with varying degrees of comparison according to the animus of the disputants. He made no such insinuations against honourable Members opposite, but he did say, as one keenly interested in this question, and who had followed closely the affairs of the Church of Scotland for a number of years, it was his firm conviction that in acting as they were doing that afternoon, in opposing the Second Reading of this Bill, they were not acting in a manner

which would conduce either to their popularity or to their influence in Scotland.

Mr. HALDANE (Haddington) said he rose, in the first place, to disclaim altogether the point of view suggested by the speech of the honourable Member for the St. Andrews Burghs. If the honourable Member, or anybody else, would point to any difficulty in which the Established Church of Scotland was placed, and which required any amendment of the law which did not go to the transformation of the constitution of the Church, he would not allow his disestablishment principles to stand in the way of doing an act of justice. The fallacy which underlay the honourable Member's argument was in regarding this question as a much narrower one than it really was. The honourable Member who introduced the Bill spoke of it as interesting to lawyers and ecclesiastics. He was himself a little interested in law, and a great deal in theology. But there was another interest which both of the honourable Members who had defended the Bill had altogether left out of account, as the champion of which he rose from that side of the House—he meant the interests of the public. His honourable Friend the Member for Bridgeton showed conclusively that if this Bill passed, one effect of it would be to put a substantial sum into his own pocket. He did not come there to support Bills which would put money into the pocket of his honourable Friend or anybody else. What was the real proposition of this Bill? He did not profess to be able to penetrate into the mysteries of the Scottish law, but to the layman the question was a tolerably simple one. It appeared that by the old law of Scotland the parishioners were liable to keep up and repair the manse. By the parishioners were meant the owners of land in the parish; they had to contribute according to the amount of land they held. Then came a valuation which was made before the Restoration, and according to that valuation the landowners in the parishes throughout Scotland had a certain valuation put upon their land, and they were assessed in proportion to that valuation. It did not matter whether they were valued

Mr. Anstruther.

high or low, for the important thing was the proportion. Then came what was known as the Peterhead case, in which it turned out that there were a number of feuars to whom this valuation did not apply at all, and the Court of Session decided that it was legal to make a scheme under which one class of landowners should pay one rate and the other class of landowners and feuars should pay a different rate. The feuars were landowners in the parish just as much as anybody else, and so thought Lord Eldon. That had been the law of Scotland since 1802, and why they should be asked to disturb it now he could not conceive. What was proposed was to take a portion of the liability which fell on some of these landowners and extinguish it—it was a new liability, but a liability subject to which they purchased the land, and which was incumbent upon them to meet. That was a very remarkable proposition. He complained very much that a Bill of this kind was brought before the House of Commons without any information by which they could know whether they were dealing with large or small owners. In his own experience he knew of a very substantial claim being made for alterations and repairs on a manse that might fall very heavily on the feuars in the parish, and it was quite right that it should so fall. This was a burden to which they were liable to contribute, and he wished to know upon what basis they were asking the House to make a present to these landowners of the liability subject to which they bought the land, and from which they ought not to escape? If they were going to make this proposition, surely it was only right that the House should have some return and information from the Government as to the working out of a scheme of this character. There was no information available, and he should await with some curiosity to hear what the Lord Advocate had to say as to what would be the practical effect of this Measure should it ever become an Act. The real motive of bringing the Bill was to get rid of what was thought to be a grievance. The grievance was not that feuars contributed to public necessities, but that what was recognised as public and parish money should be taken and given to the Established Church of Scotland. The Established Church was

well able to provide for its own necessities. When they analysed this Bill, they would see that it was a grievance not of the feuars or of the class of landowners who contributed, but that their contributions were applied to this purpose. The Bill constituted from that point of view a remarkable argument in favour of Disestablishment. No doubt it would be on record that many of the supporters of the Established Church, and the supporters of the Unionist Party, thought this Measure a very important one, and they desired to place it on the Statute Book, in order to get rid of what they felt was a real inequality. They had now got a definition of religious inequality in this Bill, although they were invited to put an end to it. If the Bill did only that, he should have no objection to it. But it was obvious, if this question was dealt with at all, it must be dealt with on the footing not of releasing a large class of landowners of a responsibility imposed upon them, but taking that liability and applying it to purposes for which it was wanted instead of applying it to purposes for which it was not wanted. If honourable Members opposite would bring forward a Bill in that form he would give it his most favourable consideration; but in the meantime, in the interests of the great Scottish public, he for one protested against this attempt to buy off a grievance by giving public money to people who were not entitled to it.

SIR J. M. STEWART pointed out that this Bill did not appear to him to be of that comprehensive nature which honourable Members tried to make out. It was one of a simple character, and would do away with a great injustice. The effect of the Bill had been to make those feuars more satisfied than they had been in the past, and it really lay with the heritors whether the Bill was put into force or not. It was practically a permissive Bill, and was founded on the principle of trusting the people. If it was not wanted, and if the feuars objected to it, the Bill would not come into force. The decision in the Peterhead case made considerable alterations. His honourable Friend who had just sat down repudiated any idea of a dog-in-the-manger policy. Whenever this controversy had

been broached at contested elections, he found that there was the greatest unanimity of feeling on the part of the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church that something of this sort should be done, and to assert now that the object of this Bill was merely to strengthen the Established Church of Scotland was absolute nonsense. He had been asked time after time why this Bill had not been passed into law. The answer was that the Liberal Party in the House of Commons had invariably been opposed to it. He did not think that was a very high-minded principle on the part of the Opposition. They had been taunted that all aggressive legislation should cease. Was this aggressive legislation? It was perfectly monstrous to say so, for it was legislation to remedy a grievance. If there were a general election to-morrow, he firmly believed that thousands of persons who did not agree with the Establishment principle would say that this Bill was a fair attempt to remedy an admitted grievance. The honourable and learned Member for Haddington complained that no statistics on the subject had been produced. Statistics had never been moved for, and if they were called for he would not object. The last return was made by the House of Lords in 1879, when the amount spent upon the churches and mansees was £420,000. He maintained that the people of Scotland wanted this reform. The ratepayers and the feuars wanted it. It was a grievance which was not of yesterday or to-day. It had existed in his recollection for the last 20 years. The real object of the Bill was not to strengthen the Church, as honourable Members opposite alleged, but to get rid of a grievance. There should be no objection to a notice being given by advertisement in cases where there were more than 40 feuars. It was ridiculous in the extreme to suggest that the mansees of Scotland were the palatial residences depicted by the imagination of the honourable Member for Glasgow. It was hard on a ministry composed of men who were doing a noble work perseveringly, courageously, unobtrusively, and on small stipends, to single out isolated instances in support of the argument that the Bill was an attempt to bolster up a system which gave palatial residences to the

ministers of the country. There was no foundation, in fact, for such a suggestion, and he hoped the House would give a Second Reading to the Bill and that before long it would be passed into law.

On the return of Mr. SPEAKER, after the usual interval—

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan and Kinross) said he would vote against the Bill, because it seemed to him that it was indefensible in principle; that, if carried into law, it would work injustice in practice; and, further, that it would not carry out the objects which his honourable Friend who introduced it proposed to effect. His honourable Friend said it was to remedy a particular grievance, and that grievance was that the small owners of land, commonly called feuars, were liable to be assessed under the present law for the building and repair of parish churches and mansees. If his honourable Friend's view was well founded, there must be some ground why this particular rate should be imposed, not on the heritors or the land generally, but only upon owners of land of some particular extent. He was not aware of any rate imposed upon land which possessed that quality. If the rate was a proper rate to be levied upon land at all, then in the allocation of it they should disregard the question whether a man owned much land or little. He would assume that this was the kind of rate which was rightly imposed on land, and on that assumption the aim in the allocation of every rate on land with which he was acquainted was to make the burden of the rate proportionate to the extent or value of the land held by the person assessed. The large owner should pay proportionately to his amount, and the small owner to his. It was not a rate upon some personal quality of the owner, but upon the land. His honourable Friend did not in so many words dispute that proposition, but he rather implied that through some misadventure, in the shape of a judgment of the House of Lords, there had been a misapplication of that principle. It was commonly known as the Peterhead case, but his honourable Friend was entirely mistaken in regard to its character and effect. The obligation of maintaining ecclesiastical buildings in Scotland was

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by certain old statutes imposed on the persons described as parishioners. That had been interpreted to mean heritors, which again simply meant holders of land. That was the whole of the law on the subject. His honourable Friend, however, seemed to think that only a particular class of owners of land, the large owners, should bear this burden, and he spoke of its having been the practice to pay it according to the old valued rent. But the old valued rent was the valuation of the land of Scotland at the time it was made. There was not then, as now, a simple and ready method provided under the Act of 1854 of bringing up the valuation of land to its true amount year by year, and, accordingly, because there was no other valuation, that old valuation described as the valued rent by his honourable Friend, continued to be used for rating purposes long after it had absolutely ceased to represent the true value of the land of the country. That was not a merit, but a defect; it was not statute law, but merely to save trouble, a mode of administering statutes which laid the burden upon the parishioners or heritors. The decision of the House of Lords could not be impugned or even questioned by any lawyer, or by any layman who understood the matter. There was no mystery or sanctity about the old valued rent. This was a burden upon the value of the land, and wherever that old valued rent had ceased to represent the true value of the land, the real and actual rent should be the basis of assessment. His honourable Friend could not have been aware of that fact when he said that the court most unfortunately interfered in 1802. They simply interfered when the matter was put before them, in a way which no man acquainted with the question could doubt was correct. If there was any mistake, it was in not sooner taking the real rent, or, in other words, the true annual value of the land as the basis of assessment. His honourable Friend spoke of the House of Lords introducing the real rent, as if they had in their judicial capacity undertaken to legislate. They did nothing of the kind. So far from the Peterhead case settling anything new, it merely embodied a truism in a judicial decision. His honourable Friend spoke as if it created a

new grievance, but the decision was pronounced about 97 years ago. Land had changed hands during that time, and feus had been granted in the light of that decision, and in the knowledge that the unassailable principle which it affirmed would govern the liability to assessment of owners of land, whether held in large or in small lots. His honourable Friend went as far as to say that that was a new misuse of assessment. Again, he used the expression, "the real value, but not the true value." The fact was, however, that there was no true value but the real value. It was the valued rent which was not the true value. He positively called the small heritors false heritors. Why false? They owned land like other people, they were the real owners of the land, and accordingly, if his honourable Friend had been well advised of the true state of the facts with which he was dealing, he never would have brought in this Bill, or at all events he never could have sustained it by the kind of arguments which he used. Those arguments were based upon this extraordinary error into which he had fallen—the moment this error was corrected the whole fabric of his argument fell to the ground, and everything he said came to be an argument in the opposite direction. He rather apologised for the smallness of his Bill. He said it was only a step, but a step in the right direction. His honourable Friend of the St. Andrews Burghs (Mr. Anstruther) also apologised for the Bill, because he said the remedy was not universal or altogether logical. He heartily agreed with both honourable Members. It was not a universal remedy and it was most certainly not a logical remedy. If a man was to be relieved from rates when he owned a small piece of land, the logical thing would be to relieve the man who owned the larger part too, unless they could show that the larger owner was getting some benefit from the rate which the small owner was not getting. The Church, however, was meant for all the indwellers in the parish, quite irrespective of whether they owned land or not, and whether they were large landowners or not. Therefore, the Bill was not defended as being in any sense a scheme for the payment by results for religious ordinances. He submitted, therefore, that the whole argument of his

honourable Friend failed unless he could show some reason for not laying an assessment of this kind upon land if it happened to be cut up into small bits. He knew of no rateable land which was liable to be dealt with in that way. But let them see what the extraordinary proposals of this Bill were. It was urged that it was a Bill to remedy the grievance of small owners of land being called upon to pay. The Bill did not do this expressly or avowedly, but, as he read the Bill, there were two modes in which his honourable Friend proposed to bring this about. He did not say in so many words that small owners were to be relieved, because that would have compelled him to address himself to the difficult task of saying how many acres was to involve the right of exemption, and when the land was to begin to be assessed. Instead, he did two things which would bring about the result—one was to propose that the majority of the persons described as valued rent heritors should have the power of adhering to the valued rent as the basis of assessment, and as most of the small owners of land would not be on valued rent roll, his honourable Friend meant, he took it, that they would escape. The other method was that there was to be a deduction of £20 from the actual rental of each heritor, so that if some volunteer would make good the effect of this deduction, it would wipe out the indebtedness of the small owner of £20 or less nominal value, and relieve the larger owner to a corresponding extent. A scheme of legislation so extraordinary and anomalous was never before devised. He perfectly understood the reason the Bill assumed that form, because if his honourable Friend came out into the open and said what he wanted—that he wanted to exempt all pieces of property below a particular extent, or of less than a particular annual value—no one would have listened to his Bill. That was what it came to, although it was wrapped up in these somewhat obscure clauses with an appearance of archæology that was perfectly admirable. The first clause was to give the majority of the valued rent heritors the right to insist on the valued rent being the basis of assessment. His honourable Friend contended that it was very wrong that one

valued rent heritor should be allowed to disturb a peaceful scheme of placing the whole burden upon the valued rent. He could only say that any state of the law which would prevent an owner of land insisting on the adoption of the true and actual basis for the time being would deserve the description given to the present law. He could not conceive anything more unjust in the allocation of a tax upon land—always assuming that it was one which ought to be upon land—than to give power to persons to say: "This shall be based on the valued rent, which is a historical thing two or three hundred years old, and not on the value as it is to-day." That would in some cases have the effect of letting off nine-tenths, or at least a very large proportion, of the rateable property in the parish. It was the right of every man to see that a just basis of valuation and rating was adopted. The proposal in the Bill would really be to bind a man to subscribe to relieve all the other real rent heritors in the parish, who might be far richer men than himself. There were many parishes in Scotland which at the time when the valuation was made on which the valued rent is based were practically rural parishes, with hardly any buildings or industries in them. Many of these had now come to be filled up with industries and property of enormous value, bringing a teeming population to the place, who would be counted upon in determining the size of a new church, because in Scotland the heritors were bound to provide a church to accommodate what was called two-thirds of the examinable persons in the parish. The result of his honourable Friend's contention would be, that although these new industries brought a great population to the locality, they were not to contribute a penny towards the cost of the new church, and the obligation to pay would fall on the persons whose land was assessed on the historical basis of two or three hundred years ago, the valued rent heritors, to whom these industries might do no good, whose property they might ruin, and who, nevertheless, might have to provide for the supply of religious ordinances to the owners of these properties, and the persons in the employment of their owners. Such a proposal would not stand examination. Under

such a system, an entirely artificial basis of assessment would be taken, which would allow for the larger part of the property in the parish to escape contribution. He knew cases in which the buildings erected in connection with certain industries had a larger rateable value than all the rest of the parish put together. For instance, the works which conveyed the water of Loch Katrine to Glasgow passed through a number of parishes, and there was certainly one of those parishes—perhaps more—in which the valuation of these great waterworks was larger than the valuation of all the rest of the parish taken together, yet not one penny of contribution would be made by those waterworks under this Bill, because his honourable Friend took as his basis of assessment the valuation of a period when Glasgow was a small town, and the Loch Katrine Waterworks were not thought of. That was the kind of injustice to which his honourable Friend proposed that a majority of the valued rent heritors should be able to compel one of their number to submit. The proposition would not stand argument for one moment. If this rate on land was a just one it should apply to the value of the land for the time being. The proposals contained in the fourth and fifth clauses were also very singular. There never had been and never could be any difficulty in allocating this or any other assessment, and no provision was needed for such a purpose. With a modesty that was perfectly admirable, the small owner was kept in the background, but to find out what the Bill really meant they must bring him into the light. The fifth clause said that no assessment should be levied upon the church or dwelling-house of any religious body or minister in Scotland. He agreed that these buildings should not be assessed for such a purpose, but the ground of their exemption would apply to many other things. In 1884 the House of Commons passed by a majority of 57 an Amendment declaring against a system of compulsory assessment for ecclesiastical purposes, and everything that has happened since then had strengthened that declaration. If it was inequitable, as the Bill admitted, to assess a place of worship or a manse belonging to another denomination, what made it equitable to any member of that denomination

assessed for the erection or repair of ecclesiastical buildings of a Church to which he did not belong? The provision to which he referred was an apologetic confession that there was something wrong in the system of assessment, and the confession would carry the confessor a great deal further than he intended. The provision was put in because the assessment of a church or of a dwelling-house occupied by the minister of any other denomination shocked the conscience. But the principle was the same with regard to the private property of any member of such other denomination. The proposal that everybody should get a deduction of £20 from his rental was most extraordinary. Like the rain, it was to fall on the just and unjust, the rich and the poor alike. But there was nothing certain about the deduction: it was only effective "when the amount of the deficiency which would thereby be created in the total amount of assessment has been paid to the collector of the assessment by the Kirk Session." It was very ingenious to suggest that by such a deduction the small owner would be freed, but when that individual came to think of it, he would see it was a highly improbable and very contingent benefit, for where would the Kirk Session get the money to make good the deficiency? Was it from the church-door collections? If not, then from what source? He was not aware that it was common for Kirk Sessions to be capitalists or to be in possession of large sums, with which they could do anything they liked. He was afraid it would be a long time before this method would bring relief to either the rich or poor, unless some pious donor presented the money to the Kirk Session, and he did not know where such a donor was to come from, with the knowledge that his gift would benefit not only the small but the large owners. The Bill of 1884 boldly proposed to let off everybody under £4, but the proposal had not been renewed, because it would disclose the untenable position that owners of small pieces of land should be relieved at the expense of owners of larger pieces of land. When the small owner found that the millionaire next door got the same nominal deduction, and that, in fact, there would be no deduction, as Kirk Sessions instead of being flush of money, were

generally in need of it, he would not care for the Bill. The next part of the Bill went on to propose something quite inconsistent with all their ideas of what a Scottish parish church should be. One of the rights of a parishioner in Scotland was that of accommodation in the parish church; but if by reason of the Bill any heritor was exempt from assessment, he was not to be accommodated in his parish church, but in the event of an allocation of seats the sittings which would have been assigned to the exempted heritors were to be "allocated to the Kirk Session in behoof of the congregation." Therefore, the penalty which the Bill provided should be suffered by any man who did not pay a voluntary assessment was that he should not be allowed to worship in his parish church. He asked if the Kirk Session were meant to treat these sittings as derelict or forfeited property, and turn them into a source of profit by letting them to strangers, while the parishioner who did not pay a voluntary assessment was not allowed to enter his parish church? Did not his honourable Friend see that such a proposal was the first step to disestablishment of a most unequivocal kind? It had been said by an honourable Member opposite that they on the Opposition side were very fond of talking about "trusting the people." But this Bill gave no power to anybody, except a power to a bare majority of the valued rent heritors to coerce the minority.

SIR J. M. STEWART: For the benefit of the minority.

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR: For what the majority think the benefit of the minority, who, if they do not pay a voluntary contribution, are not to be allowed to worship in their parish church. The wish to see rates diminished, or not to pay any, was inherent in all human nature, and was not confined to Scotland; but he greatly doubted whether anybody in Scotland would want this Bill if it was thoroughly understood. Some light might be thrown upon the wishes of Scotland by the Division on the Bill. He could not understand why the sympathy of the honourable Baronet (Sir M. Stuart) should go out to the small owners and not extend to the widow who had been referred to during the

Debate. In conclusion, he hoped that the Member for Durham would speak during the Debate and adhere to the view he expressed 15 years ago, that the true remedy was to make church rates in Scotland, as in England, voluntary, and not compulsory.

*MR. GRAHAM MURRAY, in stating the view of the Government on the Bill, said he did not think the House was anxious to have a discussion between lawyers on the Peterhead case. He would, therefore, only say that while the House of Lords laid down no new principle in 1802, they must remember that the Peterhead case referred to the building of a new church, and that in Scotland the building of a new church was a somewhat rare thing. The right honourable Gentleman (Mr. J. B. Balfour) knew that up to the moment, in all purely agricultural parishes, the assessment was not the real rent but the valued rent, and that although it was quite true that the valued rent represented a valuation made some two hundred or three hundred years ago, it consequently did not now represent the true proportion in value of the various lands embraced under it. The right honourable Gentleman also knew that it was made a matter of special legislation in comparatively recent times. He was referring to the Ecclesiastical Assessment Act, which provided that where the area of the church had been allocated according to the valued rent assessment should also be on valued rent (and that principle applied to the very large majority of the churches in Scotland). The assessment for church purposes must be put upon the values, and not upon the real rent. He thought he had shown that, although the right honourable Gentleman's law was perfectly right, yet, as a matter of fact, there was not that uniformity of procedure which always put the burden upon land according to its exact value as it now was. The honourable Baronet who moved its rejection divided his speech into the practical and the metaphysical. The practical consisted of what was a frank recital of one of his last election speeches—and he was particularly oratorical upon the case of the poor lady who was in Glasgow Infirmary, and whose goods in her absence came under the hammer in consequence of her assess-

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ment not having been paid. There was no difficulty in feeling sympathy with the lady. But the same thing would have happened if, instead of the ecclesiastical assessment, she had not paid her water rate or gas rate, and it was scarcely a grievance against the Church of Scotland. Nor could he congratulate the honourable Baronet on the metaphysical part of his speech. He saw the honourable Baronet surrounded by philosophers, and he left it to them to determine whether his exposition of the word metaphysical was in accordance with what was understood by that word in Scotland or England. He should not have thought it a metaphysical argument to say that the Bill was an infringement of the Treaty of Union, still less to quote a poem whose authorship the honourable Baronet wished to attribute to him. He was not among the poets, and he would hope, with regard to the argument about the Treaty of Union, that the honourable Baronet would remember it when he made his next Disestablishment speech.

*SIR C. CAMERON explained that he used that argument in consequence of the invectives hurled at his own head when he brought forward Disestablishment.

*MR. GRAHAM MURRAY said he was charmed to hear that the honourable Member was converted. The honourable Baronet was followed by the honourable and gallant Member for Aberdeen, who put his opposition to the Bill on a perfectly different platform. He discoursed much on what he called the injustice of ecclesiastical assessments at all, and he was rather prone to start, if he had not been interrupted by the ruling of Mr. Speaker, on the thorny subject of disestablishment. He was not going to follow the honourable Member there, and he was really relieved from saying much on the question of the injustice of ecclesiastical assessment by the next speech made on his side of the House, by the honourable and learned Member for Haddington. That honourable and learned Member said what one would quite expect him to say, that what ever his views were on establishment or disestablishment he would never make him hold his hand from remedying what he thought was an injustice in

the constitution of the Church. And, so far from calling the ecclesiastical assessments an injustice, the honourable and learned Gentleman said they were nothing of the kind. They were a mere burden on the lands. Everybody had bought and sold their lands in the knowledge that that burden would be exacted, and, therefore, he could not see any injustice in the matter. The honourable and learned Gentleman went on to say that what he could not bring himself to agree to in the Bill was the plan of giving public money to people not entitled to it. He could not help thinking that the honourable and learned Member, and nearly every other honourable Member who had spoken, had taken, according to his humble judgment, quite a wrong view of the purpose of the Bill. A good deal of wrongness of view turned, he thought, on a misunderstanding of the word which was used by his honourable Friend who moved the Bill—the word “grievance.” He did not think his honourable Friend meant in using the word “grievance” that there was any right in law to object to, or any injustice in an assessment, the exaction of which distressed some people. His idea of a grievance was that there were many situations where even the fulfilment of a perfectly legal burden was very harassing and irritating; and where the amount or irritation was not at all commensurate with the benefit received. He believed that this Bill was simply an honest attempt to do away with such occasions of irritation and to stop, no doubt, one or two election speeches like those recited by the honourable Baronet who moved the rejection of the Bill. Then came the critical examination of the Bill by the right honourable and learned Gentleman the Member for Clackmannan. In the first place he seemed to think that it was a very curious thing that he knew of no instance where a burden imposed on land should not necessarily be put on all land estates, great and small. He (the Lord Advocate) noted in passing, that houses were lands for the purposes of rating, and his right honourable Friend would find it ready to his hand in the case of the Inhabited House Duty.

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR: That is an Imperial tax, not a local rate.

*MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: What was the difference so far as principle was con-

cerned between the Land Tax and the Inhabited House Duty? But, really, that was not his answer. His answer to his honourable Friend and to the honourable and learned Member for Haddington was that so far as liability was concerned this Bill left matters precisely as it found them; and, therefore, whether they looked upon it as a question of liability to taxation, or from the point of view of disendowment, they would find that the liability of landowners was precisely the same after this Bill was passed as before. The first proposal in the Bill was limited only to cases in which the assessment had been in use to be imposed on the valued rent. It had been discussed on the one side as if this was universal, but that was not so. In that case, it allowed a majority of the valued rent heritors to resolve whether the assessment should continue. He would remind the House that in many parishes in Scotland—in fact over the whole of Scotland—where the heritors were friendly to the Church, they had very often, sooner than put the real rent heritors to the annoyance of assessment, voluntarily dealt with that assessment as on valued rent, and did not insist that the assessment should be altered to real rent. When they came to the details of the Bill in Committee he thought it would be for the consideration of his Friend in charge of the Bill whether it would not be better to put in some such Amendment as would provide for practical unanimity of the heritors to determine that the assessment should be levied on valued rent instead of by a bare majority. He thought that the illustration of his right honourable and learned Friend took as to waterworks, and the “examinable” population was a very inapposite one, because, although waterworks were a very valuable subject, they did not contribute to any amount to the “examinable” population. It seemed to him that the particular illustration made use of by his right honourable and learned Friend was also inappropriate as to when the assessment should be changed; for the Peterhead case came in on the rebuilding of a church that was to accommodate two-thirds of the parishioners. The right honourable and learned Gentleman then passed to the second part of the Bill, and he seemed to argue that the subsection to clause 5, which allowed the exemption

in favour of the churches and dwelling houses of ministers of other religious bodies than the Church of Scotland, was really the concession of an injustice. It was nothing of the kind. The right honourable and learned Gentleman entirely forgot that in Imperial statutes they were perfectly familiar with clauses of exemption in favour of buildings for religious purposes, and in favour of schools, as well as of other public institutions. The right honourable and learned Gentleman believed that it was logically wrong to include the manse, but surely that was a small matter on which to base objection to the whole Bill. The last matter referred to by the right honourable and learned Gentleman was to the exemption of small owners. But the liability of the owners remained where it was before. The Bill only allowed the Church to come forward to exempt certain owners, in order to avoid the irritation caused to these small owners by being assessed. He thought his honourable Friend in charge of the Bill should consider whether instead of allowing each heritor or feuor to have a deduction of £20 made from his real rent before his quota of assessment was levied, he should limit the exemption to those whose rental was below £20. This obviously was a matter of detail. He did not think there was very much in the criticism of his right honourable and learned Friend about the Kirk session not having the purse. He did not think that much mattered. They all knew where the money was to come from.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where?

*MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: Well, of course, from voluntary subscriptions.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Voluntaryism.

*MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: Certainly by voluntary subscriptions. He did not understand either the cheers or the jeers of his honourable Friends opposite. He had often heard from these Benches perfectly pious prayers in favour of voluntary subscriptions, and that these would be diminished in regard to Voluntary schools. A point which had been entirely missed was that this Bill did not alter the rating at all. It merely allowed, in cases where irritation had

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been caused before, those friendly to the Church to come forward through the recognised organ of the Church, the Kirk Session, and pay the money which was given in lieu of these small and irritating assessments, for the benefit of the Church. It was because the Bill did that that it seemed to him to be calculated to remove what had on occasion caused strife and dispeace, while at the same time it did not alter the law of the land, and left all questions of disestablishment and assessments where they were. I support the Second Reading of the Bill.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanark, Mid.) thought the friends of the Church had been very ill-advised in raising this question. The discussion was bound to demonstrate the fact that the Established Church of Scotland was a national institution, and as it was there for the benefit of the whole people, and that churchmen as such had no special advantage in the parish church. The claim which was set forth that the Church of Scotland had certain rights of its own was incompatible with the theory that the parish church was the church of the whole parishioners, and that the whole parishioners, whether dissenters or churchmen, had an equal right to worship in it, and that, therefore, the parish church was the property of all the parishioners. It might be shown that a good many ancient endowments were given to the church by pious persons, and to that extent it might be said that the Church had a property of its own. But there was no room for saying that the Church had any right of property of its own in these assessments. They were purely assessments on the land in the parish—upon every proprietor in the parish, whether he attended the parish church or not, or whether he was a dissenter, and paid for his own religious worship. The accommodation in the parish church had reference to the population of the parish, and the law required that it should accommodate two-thirds of the "examinable" persons, which meant two-thirds of the inhabitants above 12 years of age. That had been repeatedly laid down in the Supreme Law Courts in Scotland. In one particular case, that of the island of Barra, the majority of the population were Roman Catholic, and in that case the court allowed less

than two-thirds. In the case of Bothwell parish also the legal accommodation in the parish church would have been 1,600, but the Presbytery agreed that 1,200 was sufficient, and the court decided that, in the special circumstances of the case, no more was necessary. Therefore they had this fact established, that the Parish church existed for the benefit of the whole parishioners. In like manner the right to sitting accommodation in the parish church belonged to the whole parishioners. In the first place, every heritor had seats allocated to him, according to the teinds paid, not according to whether he was a churchman or a dissenter. And after the heritors, who had the prior right, every parishioner was entitled to enter the parish church and worship there. But the heritors, it was held, had no right of property in their seats, and they could not let them to other people. So also with regard to the church door collections, which, it had been decided by law over and over again, must be for the benefit of the poor of the parish as a whole, without reference to their religious belief. The Kirk Session were bound to distribute the church-door collections to the deserving poor, no matter whether they were dissenters or members of the church. The minister was also the minister of the whole parish, and was bound to marry everyone who was legally entitled to be married; bound to visit the poor and sick; and bound to attend funerals, whether they were those of churchmen or dissenters. So that any possible claim on the part of the Church of Scotland that the Church existed for itself was antagonistic to the fact. It existed for the parish as a whole. The Bill proposed to do away with what were supposed to be certain grievances of dissenters. The real grievance was that here was property which was held in behoof of the parish as a whole, but the use of which was being applied now by a mere section of the community—namely, those who belonged to the Church of Scotland as a religious denomination. They objected, therefore, that one particular class of the community should have the exclusive use of what was really the property of, and entitled to be used for, the benefit of the parishioners as a whole. The contention of the dissenters was

that if the members of the Church of Scotland, whose clergymen were paid out of the teinds, which was national property, were going to use these parish churches, they ought surely to pay for the up-keep of the churches where they worshipped. That was the reason why measures had been brought forward to take away the assessment on all property in the parish, whether it belonged to churchmen or dissenters, for the up-keep of the buildings, and to make the expense fall only on those who practically use the buildings. Now, the Free Church of Scotland contributed something like £600,000 for religious purposes, and the United Presbyterian Church contributed £400,000. He believed the Established Church contributed £500,000 a year. It had often been said that the Church of Scotland was the most numerous in Scotland, and the most wealthy, and it would not seem to be a great tax upon the majority of the people of Scotland, with their greater proportion of wealth, who moreover, got their clergy paid for nothing, that they should keep up the buildings where they worshipped at their own expense. The Bill only tinkered with the question, in a manner which carried injustice on the face of it. Assuming, for the sake of argument, Established Church principles, he held that as long as the parish church was regarded as the Church of the people, for the benefit of the people as a whole, and so long as the connection between Church and State continued, there was no grievance whatever in the present mode of imposing the burdens. The statute which imposed the burden did not specify the particular method to be adopted in making the assessment. As had been pointed out, the assessment was imposed originally on valued rent, and latterly they came to an assessment on real rent. Why was the assessment on real rent a just assessment? For this reason. The size of the parish church and the expense of keeping it up had reference to the population of the parish. If the population enormously increased, the burden of the parish church enormously increased. To what section of the community was the cause, practically, of the increase of population due? It was to those who came from the outside and began to feu ground and build houses, and it was for these

that the increased accommodation in the parish church became necessary. What, therefore, could be more reasonable and equitable than that they should pay their assessment according to their real rent—the real interest they had in the parish? He was surprised that the mover of the Bill did not give the House a little more light on valued rent and on the question between one valued heritor and another. In many parishes in Scotland the valued rent was valued 200 or 300 years ago, but there were lands which were not valued until more recent times and some lands which were practically not valued at all. The consequence was that in these parishes small proprietors had to pay more of the stipend of the ministers and for the repairs of the church than the largest proprietors, owing to the former having had their valuations adjusted quite recently. What was proposed to be done by the Bill was that, while these discrepancies between valued rental existed, the majority of the heritors in value should have it in their power to compel the minority to have the assessment levied on valued rent where certain heritors were suffering from a gross injustice. The Lord Advocate said that the valued rent was in operation in certain parishes, but by clause 3 it was provided that a majority of the heritors might compel the minority to pay on valued rent, although the heritor had a right to insist on a real rent valuation. Then clause 5 was meant to relieve dissenting chapels and manse from payment of assessment. If dissenters did not choose to go to the parish church they, of course, could build churches and manse of their own; but when they took land for that purpose they took it with the ordinary burdens on the land, and one of these burdens was the charge for the up-keep of the parish church and manse. They had been told over and over again that they must give effect to the provisions of the law in regard to the burdens on the land, and yet it was proposed in this Bill to relieve this burden on the land of which the parties knew when they bought the land. It had been said that there was a certain amount of grievance because the parish church manse were exempt from the payment of rates. The curious thing was that the other side

of the House should complain of the injustice of dissenting places of worship and dissenting ministers' houses being compelled to pay this assessment. The answer was that in the case of the parish church and manse they were dealing with public property for public use, and therefore it had been always exempted. If they were raising a tax for the poor of the parish they would not tax the poor person who was to get the charity, and in like manner they did not raise an assessment for the up-keep of the parish church from those who were using it. In the case of dissenting churches they were dealing with private property which was bought on the usual terms and with which the owners could do whatever they pleased. There was no analogy between the case of the right to exemption of dissenting places of worship and the parish church being exempt. Now, it might be said, why should they relieve dissenters? The question of religion, and whether a person did or did not support religious services of his own, had nothing whatever to do with the question whether landowners should pay the burdens on their property. The very same arguments applied to this. Honourable Gentlemen on the other side start principles which are only the thin edge of the wedge, and they put us to greater expense than they imagine. They were supporting a principle here which, instead of relieving a grievance, would make it all the more necessary to apply the same principle to the ministers' stipends. They were going to allow certain ratepayers to get an exemption from taxation to make up the deficiency. This was an extraordinary position, and instead of removing grievances, this Bill will create them. The proper way to deal with it was to abolish the church rate altogether, and leave the Church to pay for the up-keep of the buildings in Scotland. Dissenting Churches paid for their own churches, and surely it was not too much to say to the Established Church, which represented more than half the wealth of Scotland, that it should raise the money required itself.

Mr. ELLIOT (Durham) said that his honourable Friends had frankly and honestly stated that they brought forward this Bill with the desire to redress a grievance, and they admitted there

was a thorough justification for trying to redress it. In his opinion, the right and proper way to deal with this difficulty was to make the rate for the maintenance of churches and manses in Scotland a voluntary rate. In 1884 he carried a Resolution to that effect in the House of Commons, and he asked them not to retreat from that position. Had they ever heard in other Churches of rates being imposed, irrespective of the denomination to which the people belonged, for the up-keep of the fabrics and manses? He did not think the Bill before the House was a wise or statesmanlike Measure, but it did go some way in the right direction. His honourable Friend the Member for the St. Andrews Burghs had made in some respects the most instructive speech that had been delivered in the course of the Debate. He said it was a step in a certain direction to relieve certain persons from the obligation to pay these rates. That was the most hopeful aspect in which the Bill could be regarded. The late Lord Advocate had pointed out that the object of the Bill was to relieve the small owners, but it left the assessment on the big owners. If they could not go the full length of relieving everybody from the rate, there was something to be said for relieving the small owners, who had cried out most of all against the rate. He had hoped that legislation on the lines he advocated in 1884 must have been carried out by this time. If the House threw out this Bill it would mean that they would do nothing in the matter, and he could hardly bring himself to go into the Lobby against the Measure, although he thought very little of it. If they threw out the Bill, what chance was there of the House acting on the principles he advocated in 1884. What they had now to choose was between rejecting this Bill, and relieving in a very curious fashion certain classes of ratepayers—namely, the small owners—from these ecclesiastical assessments. He was not prepared to say that that relief was wrong, because he could not induce the House to go a great deal further, and carry the exemptions the whole length. He did not want to vote against this Bill and ruin one or two other good provisions in it. The late Lord Advocate had analysed the Measure of the Bill, and had gone a very long way

towards tearing the provisions of the Bill to pieces. He hoped the House would not let counsels of perfection stand in the way of their agreeing to this very small and modest proposal. The late Lord Advocate had made no practical proposal on the subject. Was he prepared now to say that he would keep the tax on the United Presbyterian and Free Church ministers in order to support the churches and manses of the Establishment? This Bill did remove a grievance from the small owners and the dissenting ministers. It was a grievance which was keenly felt, therefore he could not bring himself to vote for the rejection of the Bill. He should endeavour in Committee to make the exemption as wide as possible, because he thought the most businesslike course would be to deal with the subject upon the general principles which were laid down in 1885. He hoped that he had made the reason why he could not support the rejection of this Bill quite clear.

MR. BIRRELL (Fife, W.) said his honourable Friend who had just sat down had made one thing perfectly plain, and that was what a sad thing it was to become a Liberal Unionist. A few years ago his honourable Friend was full of faith, hope, and high principles, when a much better Bill than this, a much more effective and workmanlike Measure, was before the House. His honourable Friend would have none of it because it did not carry out those principles to which he was then closely attached. Since then 15 years had passed over his honourable Friend's head, and he had now lost sight of the necessity for arguing the case from the point of view of principle, and was satisfied to read a second time a Measure of which he had spoken in terms which he, having regard to the feelings of the Honourable Members opposite, should be very sorry to repeat. He regarded this Bill as one of a series of electioneering Measures, having for their object to whittle away great principles of the Church Establishment in Scotland, and to deprive the Church of Scotland of all its principles one after the other, but to leave it in possession of its share of national property. When honourable Members opposite said there was a grievance which they ought to reform, he agreed with

them. He agreed with his honourable and learned Friend the Member for Haddington when he said—

"Show me a real grievance in the work of the Church viewed as a spiritual body, and I will gladly participate in any reform that may be required to remove that grievance."

For he would deem it a contemptible thing to do anything to interfere with its spiritual utility. But it was monstrous to speak of there being any particular grievance in this matter. The only grievance was that in Scotland there was an Established Church. It was not quite accurate to transfer all their history and views that had gathered round the Church Establishment in England to the Church Establishment in Scotland. The Church of Scotland had run to the land. At the time of the Reformation Church property in every sense of the word was taken over by persons who called themselves heritors, subject to three great trusts. One was to maintain the fabrics and manses, to see that public worship was carried on within these buildings, and the other was education and the maintenance of the poor. They had slipped off two of these obligations, but the third great obligation remained. That was the whole history of the Church Establishment in Scotland. It was a burden cast on the land to maintain the fabrics of the churches and manses of the Establishment, and there was no more grievance in calling on the small landowner to pay his quota or share—the obligation which law and morals cast upon him, having largely enriched himself on this property—than there was in requiring the big landowners to pay. It was harassing and irritating, but it was always harassing and irritating to pay anything. It was just as harassing to pay their debts and to keep down the interest on mortgages; therefore he could not agree that there was in this matter anything that could be called a grievance at all, unless they chose to say it was a grievance to have an Established Church. The difficulty of collecting the rates in Scotland, no doubt, gave rise to a good deal of opposition and ill-feeling. The Church rates in England were on a different footing owing to the entirely different history of the two Establishments. In the case of the Church of Scotland, there was

the clearest obligation on the part of the heritors, who, to do them justice, had never repudiated it, to maintain the fabrics and mansees of the Establishment. The collection of the rate gave rise to a good deal of trouble, therefore it was thought a good thing to buy off the opposition of a number of persons to the Established Church, and give them a bribe, a dole, or a bonus to leave off talking. That was the object of this Bill. It was exactly as if the Church Association in England were to give a £5 note to every Agnostic in Manchester or Liverpool in order that these Agnostics should not go about preaching the doctrine of Disestablishment. The real object of the Bill was to get rid of arguments against the existence of an Established Church, and he was entitled as a supporter of Disestablishment to object to the principle being whittled away in this manner, so that eventually, when they were face to face with the great question of the Establishment, there would be practically no Establishment at all. It would be there in possession of the property, but it would not be there as representing the duty and obligation of the country to maintain a particular form of religion, which was the only ground on which an Establishment could be maintained. The Bill would not relieve poor tenants. He thought it had been shown that the Bill was a sham, for it would enable them to do that which they were perfectly at liberty to do without it, and he hoped that the Amendment to read the Bill this day six months would be pressed to a Division.

MR. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk) said he was not in a position to discuss the legal aspect of the question, but would try to deal with it from a practical point of view. He believed that so long as a church was in good repair the heritors were not compelled to enlarge it, though they might do so voluntarily. Stress had been laid on the fact that feuars were owners, but he did not think that when feuering was started in Scotland the feuars ever expected that they would have to pay a portion of an assessment which was then paid solely by the landowner. But by the decision of the House of Lords in

1802, the owner had been relieved of part of his burden, and that was the injustice which this Bill sought to correct. It wished to secure that those feuars who were now treated as owners should be exempt at least up to the limit £20, but the clause dealing with that was not very explicit. His own name was on the back of the Bill, and therefore he possibly ought to have taken more care in the matter to see that it was made right; but like many other Members, he had put his name to the Bill without very closely scrutinising its wording, but approving entirely of its principle. But he had made inquiries, and was told that under the clause feuars under £20 would be exempted. Still, that should be made absolutely clear at a later stage. He believed that the decision of the House of Lords which created this difficulty was given in opposition to that of the Scottish Courts. In Scotland, as they were all aware, the churches and mansees were kept up by the heritors, while in England the incumbents kept up the rectories. So that in Scotland they were a little more liberal to their incumbents than in England. But the object of this Bill was to remove what he held to be an injustice to the feuars, and relieve them from contributions where churches or mansees had to be rebuilt or repaired. In most parishes they had voluntary contributions from the feuars and others for the purpose, and he believed that the majority of the inheritors throughout Scotland were perfectly willing to take upon themselves any responsibility in the shape of increased contributions which might accrue on the passing of this Bill. In the parish to which he belonged, where the church cost between £12,000 and £14,000, they did not assess a single feuar. Something had been said about the allocation of seats to the feuars in the parish churches; but it was expressly declared that every inhabitant of Scotland—man, woman, or child—could claim a sitting in the Established Church.

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR said that the sittings were left in the hands of the Kirk Session, and what he suggested was that, if this Bill passed, the existing seats of the feuars would be in the hands of the Kirk Session to let them to others.

MR. THORBURN pointed out that the right honourable Gentleman was under a misapprehension regarding this matter. All the sittings which the Kirk Session could let were those which were in supplement of the number in the church which had been rebuilt, and all the sittings which were in the church prior to its restoration were free at the present moment. The Member for Mid Lanark had said that the Church of Scotland was the church of the heritors.

MR. CALDWELL: That was not so. What he said was that the churches in Scotland belonged to the people as a whole, and not to a particular denomination.

MR. THORBURN contended that the Church of Scotland was more the Church of the people than any other Church in the Kingdom, and more people belonged to it relative to the population than in England belonged to the Church of England. He would not detain the Committee any longer, but he was convinced in his own mind that the opposition to this Bill would not give satisfaction to a very large proportion of the people of Scotland. He believed there was a very strong desire for the Bill, and there would have been a feeling of great dissatisfaction if the Government had not given their moral support to this Bill, and not only that, but given every facility for its passage through the House of Commons.

*MR. T. SHAW (Hawick Burghs) said there was one thing he had hardly expected to hear in this Debate, and that was their old familiar catchword about the Church of Scotland being the Church of the people. He would grant for the moment that it was so in a very wide and comprehensive sense, and he would ask in what respect that Church was distinguished from any other Church of the people of the north of the Tweed. It was distinguished by the singular circumstances that it did not pay for the upkeep of its churches and ministers' houses. One of the most remarkable speeches of the Debate was the speech of his honourable Friend the Member for Durham. His honourable Friend, upon points of principle, was as rigid as ever, and his opinions were just the same. He had not altered, but circumstances had

altered the situation in which he found himself. Accordingly, whereas formerly he was met with a Bill better than this, and still that Bill was not good enough for him, and whereas, above all things, he was in favour of the complete abolition of compulsory church rates in Scotland, now, by some strange mental dexterity, he was still of the same opinion, but in practice—for he was a practical man—he was going to vote in the other direction. That was one of the curious facts which did occur in these cases of political association. His honourable Friend called this a curious Bill, in some respects an absurd Bill, an illogical Bill, and a Bill which would never satisfy him; and yet he was going to support it.

MR. ELLIOT: It is a step.

*MR. T. SHAW: It was a step 15 years ago, but it was not sufficient for his honourable Friend then. Political associations tended to make one thankful for small mercies. He was in a state of thankfulness, and he was going practically to change his attitude. The Lord Advocate made a very remarkable admission in regard to the Bill. He said that it contained provisions manifestly pointing to this—that where the Kirk Session chose by voluntary effort to subscribe certain portions of the church rates, then those rates were, with regard to the most clamorous section of the feuars, to be remitted. In short, here was a Bill which for the first time recognised that there might be a legitimate sphere for voluntary effort in the Church of Scotland, and in consequence, and at the will of that Church in its voluntary efforts, the land taxation of this country was to be imposed, adjusted, or remitted. He never heard in any Parliamentary Bill a proposal so grotesque as that. He entirely denied that the object of the Bill was, as the Lord Advocate said, to remove a grievance, and he would support his contention thus. There could be no grievance in any parish in Scotland, except at the will of the church in that parish. None of these rates could be imposed if the church chose to pay its own way. And, therefore, the grievance could be removed *ipso facto* by the exercise of ordinary liberality on the part of those who called themselves the Church of the

people. In 1868, compulsory church rates in England were abolished, and the reason why Scotland had all these years been debarred from similar relief was that in this House England could be governed by English ideas and Scotland could not be governed by Scottish ideas. His honourable Friend the Member for Peebles was so far quite right in saying that underneath this Bill there was the principle that it was right to continue to tax the land of the country for the support of religious ordinances in Scotland. The time had gone by for continuing a principle of that kind or reaffirming it in the Statute Book. It was said that the Bill would abolish the odium of this rate; but he would abolish the odium in the way his honourable Friend the Member for Durham proposed to do it—by abolishing the injustice along with it. It was altogether novel, and it would be wrong, to introduce by that Bill the principle of exceptions to taxation for local purposes, for the result would simply be that a great social dividing line would be drawn between the small and large taxpayer, and the Established Church would more and more become the preserve of large landed proprietors, because by the exemption the small feuwar would be debarred from his parishioner's right to free access to and accommodation in the church of his parish. As to the mode of assessment, no statutory provision would be satisfactory unless it abolished the anachronism known as valued rent. For all taxation purposes it was fiction instead of fact; and he altogether objected to give the valued rent landowners the power to declare what should be the incidence of taxation. It would involve great confusion with regard to the burdens upon heritable property in Scotland, because no one would ever know whether there was to be a regular burden or a burden according to the will of the neighbouring landowners in particular parishes. Then the sub-section about the exemption of the churches, etc., of religious bodies had been framed in absolute ignorance apparently of the Act passed in 1874, by which no assessment or rate under any general or local Act of Parliament for any county, burgh, parochial, or other local purpose whatsoever could be levied upon any church or chapel in Scotland. Turning to the finance of

the matter, he said that £42,000 per annum was raised in Scotland by way of church and manse rates. At the present moment there were 640,000 members of the Established Church, and they had at any rate as much wealth and social advantage as any other Presbyterian denomination in Scotland. They raised £385,000 a year. He asked that they should add to that sum the needed £42,000, and put an end to this grievance for ever. Would that addition be a great burden? The United Presbyterian Church raised 37s. per head for the support of religious ordinances at home and abroad. Why should not the Church of Scotland do the same? If they did, the 640,000 members would raise not £485,000 but £1,189,000 per annum.

SIR J. M. STEWART: What figures is the honourable and learned Member quoting from?

*MR. T. SHAW said that was a most legitimate question. He was quoting from the Year Book issued by the Church of Scotland.

SIR J. M. STEWART: A great many figures are not included in it.

*MR. T. SHAW said the compiler was an official who might be presumed to know the figures. The members of that Church were, he agreed, loyal to it and loved it, and many of them would do a great deal rather than it should suffer. As a witty friend of his said, it was remarkable how many people would die for their Church and bleed for their Church, and would not pay for their Church. He suggested that the Church of Scotland should, of her own initiative, abandon this compulsory church rate, and trust to the loyalty and affection of her own members. The Bill was conceived in a spirit of exclusive privilege, which he did not like to see. It was founded more upon arrogance than upon anything else—arrogance without a single spark of real independence, and so far as its machinery went, it contained the maximum of dexterity, with the minimum of fair play.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir R. FINLAY, Inverness Burghs) thought if any feature characterised the Bill

more than another it was not arrogance, but modesty. Had the honourable Member who had just spoken, and who had said that the Bill proposed to recognise for the first time in connection with the Church of Scotland the principle of voluntary contributions, never heard of the legislation which, with regard to the formation of new parishes, proceeded on the basis of voluntary contributions? If, as honourable Members opposite had said, this was really a Disestablishment Bill, he shrewdly suspected that it would have received the support of a great many Members who were going to vote against it. He frankly recognised the perfect fairness of the attitude taken by the honourable Member for Durham, in saying that he would vote for the Bill as a step in the right direction, but he was unable to agree with his severe criticism of the Measure. Perhaps he (Sir R. Finlay) was a little prejudiced, having taken an interest in the subject for a very long time, and having introduced as far back as 1886 a Bill which bore a considerable family resemblance to the present. He would be very glad if they were now on the eve of solving a problem which had occupied attention for so many years. Strong observations had been made upon the clause which proposed to take away from the heritors, who would be exempt from contribution, the right of sittings in the parish church, and with these he agreed. He hoped that that clause, which must have been inserted by inadvertence, would be struck out in Committee. It was also a matter for consideration whether it was necessary to apply the relief of £20 deduction in favour of the larger heritors, who did not want it, and in whose case there was no substantial reason for giving it. The Bill might be altered so as to apply to the smaller heritors who did not exceed £20 or any other figure in money that might be considered most suitable. After all, these were points for Committee; but as to the merits of the Bill as regarded the Second Reading, he thought the House had heard extraordinarily little which was revelant to the Debate on such an occasion. The honourable and learned Gentleman the Member for the Border Purghs said that one portion of the Bill was not wanted at all. He said that under existing legislation in Scotland

the churches of other denominations and mansees belonging to clergymen of other denominations were already exempt from all rates. He did not wish to enter into a controversy with the honourable and learned Gentleman, but he thought there was a strong reason for thinking he must be mistaken. He was in conflict with the Scottish authority on ecclesiastical matters, and that was the honourable Baronet the Member for Bridgeton. The honourable Baronet entertained the House with a most graphic and circumstantial account of the intrepid demeanour of a clergyman of the Church when a demand for ecclesiastical assessment was served upon him.

*SIR C. CAMERON said that the right honourable Gentleman would allow him to explain. He made no assertion of the law at all. The threat of a summons was sent. Whether that was another illegality in connection with the levying of the rate he did not know.

SIR R. FINLAY said that it was not for him to determine abstruse matters. He doubted whether his learned Friend was right in his view of the section and the way it applied to ecclesiastical assessment. There could be no harm, however, in making it clear. Many speakers on the other side protested against the removal of such a profitable grievance as assessing the churches and mansees of other denominations for this purpose, but they did not go so far as the honourable and learned Gentleman in defence of the Church, expressing their readiness to live, and, if necessary, die for it. But they did make it clear that the grievance was a very clear one. They were told that the Bill would not affect its purpose. The principle of the Bill was that in regard to certain small properties the trouble of collection and the initiation was out of all proportion to the results achieved. Surely it was a right and statesmanlike thing, under these circumstances, to say that they preferred to make provisions for relieving these small owners. That was the object of the Bill. A question might arise as to the precise majority of the heritors who should be entitled to bring about the change, but that, again, was a matter for adjustment in Committee. The truth was, he shrewdly

suspected that many honourable Members who had denounced the Bill as being a sham and utterly inefficient would not be nearly so keen as they were against it if they thought it was a sham and insufficient. It was because it would, to a very considerable extent, obviate the grievance which had been so sensibly felt in very many parts of Scotland that the opposition to the Bill was so keen. He was sure that the House must recollect how the honourable Baronet the Member for Bridgeton lingered lovingly over the details of a grievance which formed the subject of a speech of his at an election. Not one of the ghastly details did he spare the House. If one could hear it upon a platform, one could realise his wrath at the idea of so effective a weapon against the Church of Scotland being taken out of his grasp. He was really very sorry for the honourable Baronet. He always recognised him as a good fighting man, and he was sure that his capacity for warfare against any Established Church was such that he would be able to get on to the satisfaction of himself and his supporters even if this cherished weapon was taken away from him. What was the alternative? They were told by many speakers, particularly by his learned Friend the Member for Clackmannan, they ought to abolish assessments altogether. That would be a proposal to present to the landowners of Scotland a very large annual sum, and if such a proposal was put forward he thought that a good many Gentlemen on the other side would get up and tell them it was simply monstrous that land should be relieved from that burden—a burden which it had borne for a very long time, for hundreds of years, and subject to which every landowner had acquired his property. The honourable Member for North Aberdeen said that the Bill was a most aggressive Measure, but the honourable Member's ideas of warfare seem to be somewhat peculiar. He described himself as a member of the Disestablishment Party, and he said

their view was entirely passive; but he went on to say they were quiescent until they could see an opportunity of attacking the Church with advantage. The honourable and gallant Member, acting upon his own ideas of military strategy, as applied to political and ecclesiastical matters, turned round and said—

"What a monstrous thing it was on the part of friends of the Church of Scotland to come forward and assume the aggressive for moving an admitted grievance."

He very respectfully submitted to the House that that remark made by the honourable and learned Member was about the strongest argument that could be used in reference to this Bill.

MR. COLVILLE (Lanark, N.E.) felt that the Bill was a deliberate attempt to bolster up the Church of Scotland, notwithstanding that in the Queen's Speeches promises had been given of legislation dealing with the whole question. Any attempt to pass such a Measure simply meant a disregard of the vote expressed by the people at the election, by sending a majority of representatives to the House of Commons who desired to have a free Church in a free State. He must, therefore, oppose the Bill.

MR. GORDON rose in his place, and claimed to move—

"That the Question be now put."

But MR. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question, because it appeared to him that the House was prepared shortly to come to a decision without that Motion.

MR. McLEOD (Sutherland) expressed the opinion that if the Bill passed it would be the means of depriving small feuars of considerable rights and privileges which they had.

Question put—

"That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes 177; Noes 122.—(Division List No. 102.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
 Allsopp, Hon. George
 Anstruther, H. T.
 Arnold, Alfred
 Arrol, Sir William
 Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
 Bagot, Capt. J. FitzRoy
 Baird, J. George Alexander
 Baldwin, Alfred
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
 Banbury, Fredk. George
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Barton, Dunbar Plunket
 Bathurst, Hon. A. Benjamin
 Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
 Begg, Ferdinand Faithfull
 Bemrose, Sir Henry Howe
 Beresford, Lord Charles
 Bill, Charles
 Blundell, Colonel Henry
 Boscawen, A. Griffith-
 Bulois, Edmund
 Bowles, T. G. (King's Lynn)
 Brodrick, Rt. Hn. St. John
 Brymer, William Ernest
 Butcher, John George
 Campbell, J. H. M. (Dublin)
 Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
 Cayzer, Sir C. William
 Cecil, Lord H. (Greenwich)
 Charrington, Spencer
 Chelsea, Viscount
 Clare, Octavius Leigh
 Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
 Coddington, Sir William
 Colston, C. E. H. Athole
 Compton, Lord Alwyne
 Cook, F. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Cooke, C. W. R. (Hereford)
 Cotton-Jodrell, Col. E. T. D.
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cruddas, Wm. Donaldson
 Cubitt, Hon. Henry
 Curran, T. B. (Donegal)
 Dalbiac, Col. Philip Hugh
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Davenport, W. Bromley-
 Denny, Colonel
 Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
 Donkin, Richard Sim
 Doughty, George
 Doxford, Wm. Theodore
 Drage, Geoffrey
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manch'r
 Field, Admiral (Eastbourne)
 Finlay, Sir Rbt. Bannatyne
 Fisher, William Hayes

Flannery, Sir Fortescue
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Forster, Henry William
 Fry, Lewis
 Garfit, William
 Gibbons, J. Lloyd
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Gilliat, J. Saunders
 Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
 Goldaworthy, Major-General
 Graham, Henry Robert
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Green, W. D. (Wednesbury)
 Gretton, John
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Gunter, Colonel
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Heath, James
 Hoare, E. Brodie (Hampstead)
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Hobhouse, Henry
 Howard, Joseph
 Howell, William Tudor
 Hozier, Hn. Jas. H. Cecil
 Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
 Hutton, John (Yorks. N.R.)
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jeffreys, A. Fredk.
 Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
 Kenyon, James
 Kenyon-Slaney, Col. Wm.
 Keswick, William
 Kimber, Henry
 King, Sir H. Seymour
 Knowles, Lees
 Lawrence, Sir E. Durning-(Corn
 Lawrence, W. F. (Liverpool)
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
 Leighton, Stanley
 Llewellyn, E. H. (Somerset)
 Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Long, Rt. Hn. W. (Liverpool)
 Long, Col. Chas. W. (Evesh.)
 Lopes, H. Yarde Buller
 Lubbock, Rt. Hn. Sir John
 Macaleese, Daniel
 Macdona, John Cumming
 Maclure, Sir J. William
 McIver, Sir, H. Seymour
 McKillop, James
 Martin, Richard Biddulph
 Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.
 Maxwell, Rt. Hon. Sir H. E.
 Mellor, Col. (Lancashire)
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Milward, Colonel Victor
 Moon, Edw. R. Pacy
 More, Robt. J. (Shropshire)
 Morgan, Hn. F. (Monm'thsh.)

Morton, A. H. A. (Deptford)
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. G. (Bute)
 Murray, C. J. (Coventry)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Myers, William Henry
 Nicholson, Willim Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
 Parkes, Ebenezer
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Priestley, Sir W. O. (Edin.)
 Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
 Purvis, Robert
 Pym, C. Guy
 Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Renshaw, Charles Bine
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. T.
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Rothschild, Hon. Lionel W.
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Cheltenham)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, Wm. Edw. T.
 Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Smith, A. H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Spencer, Ernest
 Stanley, H. M. (Lambeth)
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
 Sutherland, Sir Thomas
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ
 Thorburn, Walter
 Tolmache, Henry James
 Tomlinson, W. E. Murray
 Tritten, Charles Ernest
 Valentia, Viscount
 Vincent, Col. Sir. C. E. H.
 Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Wharton, Rt. Hon. John Lloy
 Whiteley, Geo. (Stockport)
 Williams, Col. R. (Dorset)
 Willox, Sir J. Archibald
 Wilson, John (Falkirk)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
 Wylie, Alexander
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong
 Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Mr. Gordon and Sir Mark
 Stewart.

NOES.

Abraham, Wm. (Rhondda)
 Allen, W. (Newc.-under-Lyme,
 Asher, Alexander
 Ashton, Thomas Gair
 Asquith, Rt. Hn. H. Henry
 Austin, Sir J. (Yorkshire)
 Baker, Sir John

Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. B. (Clackm.)
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Bayley, Thos. (Derbyshire)
 Billson, Alfred
 Birrell Augustine
 Bradhurst, Henry
 Bryce, Rt. Hon. James

Buchanan, Thos. Ryburn
 Burns, John
 Burt, Thomas
 Buxton, Sydney Charles
 Caldwell, James
 Cameron, Sir Chas. (Glasgow)
 Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.

Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson-
 Causton, Richard Knight
 Cawley, Frederick
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Colville, John
 Crombie, John William
 Daly, James
 Dalziel, James Henry
 Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan)
 Dillon, John
 Donelan, Captain A.
 Duckworth, James
 Dunn, Sir William
 Evans, S. T. (Glamorgan)
 Fenwick, Charles
 Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Foster, Sir W. (Derby Co.)
 Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir H.
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Gold, Charles
 Gourley, Sir E. Temperley
 Griffith, Ellis J.
 Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
 Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Harwood, George
 Hayne, Rt. Hn. C. Seale-
 Hedderwick, Thos. C. H.
 Holden, Sir Angus
 Horniman, Frederick J.
 Jacoby, James Alfred
 Johnson-Ferguson, J. E.
 Joicey, Sir James
 Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)
 Jones, Wm. (Carnarvonshire)

Kearley, Hudson E.
 Kinloch, Sir J. G. Smyth
 Kitson, Sir James
 Lambert, George
 Lawson, Sir W. (Cumb'land)
 Leese, Sir J. F. (Accrington)
 Leng, Sir John
 Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Lewis, John Herbert
 Lloyd-George, David
 Logan, John William
 Lough, Thomas
 Lovell, Sir Leonard
 McLeod, John
 Maddison, Fred.
 Maden, John Henry
 Maypin, Sir Fredk. Thos.
 Mellor, Rt. Hn. J. W. (Yorks)
 Monk, Charles James
 Morgan, J. L. (Carmarthen)
 Morgan, W. P. (Merthyr)
 Morley, C. (Brexonsshire)
 Morton, E. J. C. (Devonport)
 Norton, Capt. Cecil Wm.
 Nussey, Thos. Willans
 O'Brien, J. F. X. (Cork)
 O'Connor, J. (Wicklow, W.)
 O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
 Oldroyd, Mark
 Palmer, Geo. W. (Reading)
 Perks Robert Wm.
 Philipps, John Wynford
 Power, Patrick Joseph
 Price, Robert John
 Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)

Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Roberts, John B. (Eifion)
 Roberts, J. H. (Denbighs.)
 Robertson, E. (Dundee)
 Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
 Schwann, Charles E.
 Shaw, T. (Hawick Burghs)
 Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
 Soames, Arthur Wellesley
 Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
 Steadman, Wm. Charles
 Stevenson, Francis S.
 Stuart, James (Shoreditch)
 Sullivan, D. (Westmeath)
 Tennant, Harold John
 Thomas, A. (Glamorgan, E.)
 Thomas, D. A. (Merthyr)
 Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Ure, Alexander
 Wallace, Robert (Perth)
 Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
 Wedderburn, Sir Wm.
 Weir, James Galloway
 Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams, J. Carvell (Notts.)
 Wilson, H. J. (York, W.R.)
 Wilson, John (Govan)
 Woodall, William
 Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Hud'rsfield)
 Woods, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Herbert Gladstone and
 Mr. McArthur.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and com-
 mitted for To-morrow.

SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS (SCOT- LAND) BILL.

As Amended, considered:—

A Clause (Extent and Commence-
 ment).—(*The Lord Advocate*).—brought
 up, and read the first and second time,
 and added.

Another Clause (Construction and
 short title).—(*The Lord Advocate*).—
 brought up, and read the first and second
 time, and added.

Amendments made.

Bill read a third time, and passed.

BUSINESS DEFERRED.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (WALES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
 day 10th May.

SCHOOL BOARDS (GRANTS TO VOLUN- TARY SCHOOLS) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
 day 31st May.

STREET NOISES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday
 30th May.

LIBEL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
 day 31st May.

BANKRUPTCY ACT (1883) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
 day next.

REGISTRATION OF FIRMS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
 day 31st May.

VACCINATION (CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday,
 18th May

CEMETERIES (RATING) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday
12th May.

STOLEN GOODS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday
10th May.

UNIVERSITY OF WALES (GRADUATES)
BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday
next.

STEAM ENGINES AND BOILERS (PERSONS
IN CHARGE) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday
10th May.

TOWN TENANTS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred to Friday
12th May.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTORATE (SCOTLAND)
BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday
next.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT
(1886) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday
next.

MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT (1887)
AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday
10th May.

OLD AGE PROVIDENT PENSIONS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday
next.

OUT-DOOR PROVIDENT RELIEF BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday
next.

COLONIAL SOLICITORS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday
4th May.

HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES ACT (1891)
AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday
next.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION ACT (1879)
AMENDMENT (No 2) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday
next.

WILD BIRDS PROTECTION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday
next.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday
next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (1888)
AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday
16th May.

SMALL TENANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday
18th May.

SUPPLY.

Committee deferred till Friday.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Friday.

House adjourned at forty-five minutes
after Five of the clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 27th April 1899.

The LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat upon the Woolsack at Four of the clock.

COMMISSION.

The following Bills received the Royal Assent—

1. Army (Annual).
2. Cathcart's Divorce.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with—

London, Walthamstow, and Epping Forest Railway (No. 2)—(Petition for Bill).

And the Certificate that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:

Ilford Gas.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

GLASGOW AND SOUTH-WESTERN RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]

A witness ordered to attend the Select Committee.

SOUTHAMPTON CORPORATION WATER BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Select Committee with amendments.

CROWBOROUGH DISTRICT WATER BILL.

Reported with amendments.

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BURY CORPORATION BILL [H.L.]
Reported with amendments.

TOTLAND WATER BILL [H.L.]
Committee to meet To-morrow.

LONDON HOSPITAL BILL [H.L.]
Committee to meet on Thursday next.

MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR BOARD (PILOTAGE) BILL [H.L.]
Committee to meet on Monday next.

DUBLIN IMPROVEMENT (BULL ALLEY AREA) BILL.
Committee to meet on Monday next.

CENTRAL ELECTRIC SUPPLY BILL.
Read a second time, and committed:
The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

VALE OF GLAMORGAN RAILWAY BILL.
Read a second time, and committed.

BRYNMAWR AND WESTERN VALLEYS RAILWAY BILL.
Read a second time, and committed:
The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

NUNEATON AND CHILVERS COTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL WATER BILL.
Read a second time, and committed.

STOCKPORT CORPORATION WATER BILL.

Read a second time, and committed:
The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

STOCKPORT DISTRICT WATER BILL.

Read a second time, and committed:
The Committees to be proposed by the
Committee of Selection.

RLEY-IN-WHARFEDALE URBAN
DISTRICT WATER BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

CLAY CROSS WATER BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

ILFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL
(RATES) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

GREENOCK AND PORT GLASGOW
TRAMWAYS BILL [H.L.]

Read a third time, and passed, and
sent to the Commons.

ST. ALBAN'S GAS BILL [H.L.]

Read a third time: amendments
made; Bill passed, and sent to the Com-
mons.

CROWBOROUGH DISTRICT GAS BILL.

Read a third time, with the amend-
ments, and passed, and returned to the
Commons.

ST. DAVID'S WATER AND GAS BILL.

Read a third time, with the amend-
ments, and passed, and returned to the
Commons.

SKIPTON GAS BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee.
That it is not expedient to proceed
further with the Bill; read, and ordered
to lie on the Table.

SKIPTON URBAN DISTRICT GAS BILL
[H.L.]

Reported from the Select Committee
with amendments.

DUNDEE GAS, TRAMWAYS, AND EX-
TENSION BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Committee of Selec-
tion, That the Earl of Carlisle be pro-
posed to the House as a member of the
Select Committee in the place of the Earl
of Clarendon; read, and agreed to.

ABERDEEN JOINT PASSENGER STATION
BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Committee of Selec-
tion, That the Earl of Carlisle be pro-
posed to the House as a member of the
Select Committee in the place of the Earl
of Clarendon; read, and agreed to.

LLANELLY HARBOUR AND PONTARDU-
LAIS RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Committee of Selec-
tion, That the Earl of Carlisle be pro-
posed to the House as a member of the
Select Committee in the place of the Earl
of Clarendon; read, and agreed to.

PORT TALBOT RAILWAY AND DOCKS
BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Committee of Selec-
tion, That the Earl of Carlisle be pro-
posed to the House as a member of the
Select Committee in the place of the Earl
of Clarendon; read, and agreed to.

WISHAW WATER BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Committee of Selec-
tion, That the Earl of Carlisle be pro-
posed to the House as a member of the
Select Committee in the place of the Earl
of Clarendon; read, and agreed to.

NORTH-WEST LONDON RAILWAY BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read the
first time; and referred to the Ex-
aminers.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (SWANSEA) BILL [H.L.]

Returned from the Commons agreed to.

RUSHDEN AND HIGHAM FERRERS DISTRICT GAS BILL [H.L.]

Returned from the Commons agreed to.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Fourth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 27th April 1899, providing for the distribution of the sum available for secondary or technical (including agricultural) education, under section 2, sub-section (4), of the Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1898.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, 1899.

Code of regulations for evening continuation schools; with explanatory memorandum, schedule, and appendices.

TRADE REPORTS, 1899.

I. Annual Series:

No. 2232. Chili (Valparaiso and District);

No. 2233. Turkey (Erzeroum).

II. Miscellaneous Series:

No. 502. Commercial education in Japan.

COMMERCIAL, No. 3, 1899.

Reports by Her Majesty's Representatives Abroad on the system of tenure of dwelling-houses in the countries in which they reside (in continuation of Commercial, No. 36, 1884).

MINES AND QUARRIES (GENERAL REPORT AND STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1898).

Part I. District statistics of the persons employed, output, and accidents at mines and quarries in the United Kingdom, arranged according to the inspection districts.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

JUDICIAL TRUSTEES ACT, 1896.

Additional Rule under the Act.

CERTIFIED INEBRIATE REFORMATORIES (REGULATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT).

Regulations for the management of the Duxhurst Certified Inebriate Reformatory, made with the approval of the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

LICENSING (DISQUALIFICATION OF JUSTICES REMOVAL) BILL [H.L.]

To be read a second time on Thursday next.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

To be read a second time on Friday the 12th of May next (The Earl of Camperdown).

THE CROMWELL STATUE.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS gave notice that to-morrow (Friday) he proposed to ask Her Majesty's Government whether they would cause a rough model of the proposed statue to Cromwell, and of the pedestal, to be put up, actual size, on the selected site.

PARISH CHURCHES (SCOTLAND) BILL

Reports of Amendments received.

Amendments proposed—

"Clause 3, page 2, line 21, after 'church' insert 'or manse'; line 24, leave out 'site' and insert 'sites,' and leave out 'it' and insert 'them, or either of them'; line 27, leave out 'site' and insert 'said sites'; line 30, leave out 'site' and insert 'sites.'"—*(Lord Balfour of Burleigh.)*

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Lord BALFOUR of BURLEIGH): The object of these Amendments is to put the manse in the same position as the church as regards the site if the municipal authority of a city or town desire to acquire it for an open space. It was agreed in the Standing Committee that the Amendments should be made, and I now propose them.

Question put.

Amendments agreed to.

BODIES CORPORATE (JOINT TENANCY) BILL [H.L.]

Third Reading (which stands appointed for this day) put off till To-morrow.

LUNACY BILL.

Report of the Amendments received.

Amendments proposed—

"Clause 19, page 6, line 15, leave out 'restoring' and insert 'altering.'"—*(Earl Russell.)*

EARL RUSSELL said he agreed that plans for building, restoring, or enlarging an asylum, and contracts for the purchase of lands and buildings, decided upon by a visiting committee, should not be carried into effect until approved by a Secretary of State; but as, in his opinion, the meaning of the word "restoring" was not quite clear, he moved that the word "altering" be substituted.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (The EARL of HALSBURY): I see no objection to the Amendment.

Question put—

"That the word 'restoring' stand part of the Question."

Motion negatived.

Question put—

"That the word 'altering' be here inserted."

Motion agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"Clause 22, page 8, after sub-section (2) insert as a new sub-section—'(3.) Where more than one asylum is maintained by a local authority, whether solely or in conjunction with any other local authority, and the charges for the maintenance of lunatics in the several asylums are not uniform, the local authority may make to any board of guardians sending lunatics to any of those asylums such payments as will, in the opinion of the local authority, tend to equalise the cost of maintenance of pauper lunatics in the asylums as between the poor law unions sending lunatics thereto.'"—*(The Lord Chancellor.)*

Question put.

Amendment agreed to.

LAND CHARGES BILL [H.L.]

Read the third time (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE IN IRELAND.

THE DUKE OF ABERCORN asked the Prime Minister if he could state at what date the Government expected to be able to introduce the Bill dealing with tithe rent-charge in Ireland, which was promised in the Queen's Speech. He did not intend to provoke any debate, as he thought it would be hardly fair to do so, the Bill having already been promised. But hope deferred made the heart sick, and he could assure their Lordships that there were many sick hearts in Ireland in regard to this question, and the doubt and uncertainty that existed as to the intention of the Government upon this unjust tax, which now pressed so hard, unjustly, and severely upon many of the already crippled landowners in Ireland.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, I am afraid I can only repeat to my noble Friend what has already been stated by my right honourable Friend the Chief Secretary in the House of Commons, namely—that we cannot absolutely say when the Bill will be brought forward, but we hope it will be at a very early period, and before Whitsuntide. I may add the information that the Bill is in existence, and is being submitted to its last stage of manufacture in the shape of being brought before a Committee of the Cabinet. When the Committee of the Cabinet has applied its wisdom to it, I have no doubt the Bill will be ready to be introduced to Parliament.

THE EARL OF MAYO desired to ask, in connection with this question, whether the noble Marquess could give the House any information with regard to the Board of Agriculture Bill. This Bill had been twice mentioned in the Queen's Speech, and he trusted that it would be brought in this Session. It was here, as in the matter of the Tithe Rent-Charge Bill, a case of hope deferred.

THE PRIME MINISTER: My Lords, I can only say very much the same in respect to this Bill as I said in respect to the other Measure. They are both in a forward state of preparation, and I hope they will be introduced. My noble Friend rather seems to think that Ireland has a particular grievance. I assure him that that is not the case. With respect to both England and Scotland, hearts are more sick with "hope deferred" than they are in Ireland. This is due to the machinery of Parliament not being equal to the work which it has to do. My noble Friend speaks with awe of the phenomenon of a Bill twice mentioned in the Queen's Speech, and yet not passed into law. Is my noble Friend aware that only last year we passed a Bill which has been mentioned five times in the Queen's Speech? I am afraid my noble Friend must learn the lessons of patience which come home to a Member of even the most important Parliament in the world.

IRISH LAND ACTS.

THE DUKE OF ABERCORN asked the Lord Chancellor of Ireland—(1) what alterations in procedure had been already adopted and put in force under the Irish Land Acts and Land Purchase Acts since the publication of the Report of the Fry Commission; (2) what further alterations in procedure had been decided upon; and (3) when would statutory rules be published to give effect to these alterations.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND (Lord ASHBOURNE): My Lords, in the month of July last, my noble Friend drew attention to the Report of the Fry Commission, and to the proposals made by that Commission. He then made inquiries in the same direction as those which he has now quite reasonably addressed to Her Majesty's Government. The recommendations of the Fry Commission are divisible into several heads. Some of them require legislation, some statutory rules, and some would need only directions and suggestions to be made by the heads of Departments to the subordinates to facilitate the smooth and easy working of the machinery committed to their charge; and, therefore, in considering the matter one has to bear in mind the variety of topics that are involved. I will tell my noble Friend exactly how this matter stands, and give him the fullest information possible. In the first place a new form of valuer's report has been adopted, with instructions designed to secure greater care and accuracy in the matter of inspection, valuation, and report. That is a matter of obvious importance, and one to which attention was directed by the Fry Commission, in the interests of all parties concerned, both landlords and tenants. It has been pointed out that there was a certain unevenness of knowledge on the part of the Assistant Commissioners with regard to the legal decisions that regulate the cases which come before them. That has been met by instructions for the circulation, for the information of the Assistant Commissioners and for their guidance, of legal decisions of importance pronounced both by the head Land Commission and by the Court of Appeal in Dublin. This is a matter which does not require statutory rules, but is accomplished by the ordinary machinery

of a department. The recommendation as to the inspection of drains, as to the way in which they should be carried out and so forth, has been accepted and put into force, and is at the present moment working with very great advantage. Another change which has been brought about by the ordinary mechanism is that the practice of communicating the valuer's report, which had been discontinued, has been resumed—I believe with extremely good results. Another matter which has always engaged a great deal of attention is the question of adopting some alternative procedure to the somewhat costly mechanism of fixing fair rents. The Fry Commission themselves sketched an alternative procedure, but they were not the first to do so. When the Act of 1896 was still before Parliament a very carefully and well-considered alternative procedure clause was embodied in the Measure. This clause, however, fell out of the Bill, because it was practically opposed by both Parties. Therefore it is not the fault of the Government that the alternative procedure is not found in a statutable form and in the Act of 1896. I have always thought it desirable to have an alternative procedure. The Fry Commission recommended an alternative clause, but I am informed—and I am disposed to think that it is so—that not only was it complicated in its character, but would require the aid of Parliament by further legislation to be carried out. Therefore, the Land Commission applied themselves to devise a consent alternative procedure, which was within their powers. Up to the present there has not been an opportunity of knowing how far it has been appealed to, but that procedure has been adopted, and I believe it will be found to stand the test of experience. I hope it will be accepted as an evidence that the matter has not escaped the attention which its great importance demanded. Another matter of procedure of considerable importance has also been adopted, and copies of the Pink Schedule will be sent to applicants within a certain fixed number of days after application. It is of the utmost importance that all the parties should have the fullest possible information. The Pink Schedule contains all the information that Parliament indicated in 1896 that it should contain, and has been brought up to meet the requirements of the Local Gov-

Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

ernment Act. Then, as to the tenure of the Assistant Commissioners, it would be practically impossible to make every Assistant Commissioner permanent, the work varying so enormously. It varies sometimes to such an extent that 31 Assistant Commissioners may be required one year, 40 another year, and 80 the next. You must draw a distinction between the permanent staff and the temporary staff, and there must always be a certain number of temporary Assistant Commissioners. These gentlemen have been practically given a tenure for three years, and will hold office until 31st March 1902. Another point that was pressed with great force was this—that even admitting the honesty of intention with which the Assistant Commissioners are selected, and assuming that the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary do their best, which everyone knows they do, to get the most capable, reliable, and independent men, it was desirable that a test should be applied to guarantee by adequate examination their fitness for their position. That has also been attended to, and a system of examination instituted for these appointments which will ensure that the applicants possess the necessary qualifications, and are acquainted with the value of land, the method of land valuation, and have a knowledge of land surveying. These are matters of very considerable moment, and the passing of the Civil Service examination will guarantee the possession of considerable qualifications by those who are employed to fulfil these important positions. Besides that, there is a test to be applied to see that the physical health of the applicants is adequate, and that they enjoy that robust health which will enable them to make outdoor inspections and examinations. Again, the old system of associating two lay Assistant Commissioners with each legal Assistant Commissioner will be returned to. These measures, which have commended themselves to the Land Commission, embody a number of substantial improvements in administration, and they will be worked with an earnest desire to secure efficiency and do justice to all parties. Directions have been given by the heads of the Land Commission to the staff in every way to try and meet the public requirements and the public conveni-

ence, to give all the information they are asked to give whenever they can do so, and also to supply copies of all documents when asked for them. I am quite sure that if my noble Friends who are interested in this question will apply to their solicitors, who are naturally in close touch with these questions, they will find that there are few complaints to be made now as to delays, hesitation, or unwillingness to give every information possible to facilitate and expedite matters. Turning to the subject of land purchase, the Fry Commission pointed out, not unnaturally, that at the time they made their Report, which covered the period from 1st April 1896, to 31st March 1897, the output of that particular year was only £515,252. I believe this is practically the lowest figure ever touched, and is explainable by a variety of circumstances. But in 1897-98 the output was £876,000; in 1898-99 it had sprung up to the tremendous figure of £1,771,120; while in the three months ending 31st March last it was £626,827, showing that in the present year, unless these figures unexpectedly collapse, and there is no reason to think they will, the output will be something like £2,000,000. These figures show that land purchase is working vigorously, and I think the natural deduction from that is that the existing rules are found adequate for their purpose, and that they are able to still further develop a great and growing business. This means an enormous increase in the work of the Land Commission. The noble Duke, when he last introduced this subject, referred to the working of the 40th section, and he was a little incredulous as to the possibility of that section working well. Of course, there were differences of opinion about it, but the section has passed through the diseases of infancy, and has been tested in the court over which I have the honour to preside in Ireland—the Court of Appeal. The decision swept away all doubts on the subject, and since then the section has been working perfectly satisfactorily. You have only to take up our Legal List to see the wide extent to which that section is being appealed to. I do not think there is a harder worked body in the Kingdom than the Land Commission. There are 8,000 fair-
rent appeals awaiting their hearing at the present time, and involving prolonged investigation. The only interest

of the Commission is to make the machinery entrusted to them work smoothly, justly and fairly to landlords and tenants alike, and they are watching and noting with a view to further improvements in the Rules.

THE EARL OF MAYO said the Land Commission had certainly advanced since last year, but he should like to see their Rules still further improved. He would like the Lord Chancellor of Ireland to inform the House where noble Lords could get copies of these Rules, so that they could furnish them to their solicitors.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND: Every Statutory Rule is published and printed by the Queen's printer, and presented to Parliament. Copies can be obtained in London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, and the particular Rule I have before me can be bought for the ridiculously small sum of one half-penny.

THE EARL OF MAYO said that what noble Lords desired was to get copies of the Rules that were not Statutory Rules.

ANCHORS AND CHAINS CABLES BILL.
Brought from the Commons.

Read the first time; and to be printed.
(No. 58.)

SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Brought from the Commons.

Read the first time; and to be printed.
(No. 59.)

NEW BILLS.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (LONDON) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Education Department under the Elementary Education Acts, 1870 to 1893, to enable the School Board for London to put in force the Lands Clauses Acts (No. 60): and

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (LIVERPOOL) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Education Department under the Elementary Education Acts, 1870 to 1893, to enable the School Board for Liverpool to put in force the Lands Clauses Acts (No. 61):

Were presented by the Lord Churchill (for the Lord President (*D. Devonshire*); read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

House adjourned at seventeen minutes after Five of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 27th April 1899.

Mr. SPEAKER took the Chair at Twelve of the clock.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRADE, Etc.

Ordered, That the Standing Committee on Trade, etc., have leave to sit this day during the Sitting of the House.
—(*Mr. John Edward Ellis.*)

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, namely:—

London, Walthamstow, and Epping Forest Railway (No. 2).

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

MESSAGE TO ATTEND THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS.

The House went;—and, being returned;—

Mr. Speaker reported the Royal Assent to,—

1. Army (Annual) Act, 1899.
2. Cathcart's Divorce Act, 1899.

GAS LIGHT AND COKE COMPANY BILL

By Order,—Third Reading deferred till Thursday 11th May.

LONDON WATER (PURCHASE) BILL (BY ORDER).

Mr. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I move that the Second Reading be postponed to 1st June.

Mr. DUNCOMBE (Cumberland, Egremont): We have received no notice that these Bills were to go off, and I must say that great inconvenience arises from honourable Members being brought down here to consider Private Bills (by Order), and that then they should be put off. I have an objection to their going off, and I move that the Amendment be taken now.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member cannot move an Amendment to do that. The only thing the honourable Member can do is to vote against the postponement of the Second Reading.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): I wish to say that as the Bill is put down by Order it ought to be proceeded with, but the difficulty that the House is in is that the honourable Member who has undertaken to move its rejection is not here. His notice for rejection is on the Paper and he is not here, an arrangement having been come to between the parties. Of course, I have nothing to say to that arrangement, but I must object to the postponement of a Bill in this manner. The Bill is down "by Order," and to postpone it in this way is a most inconvenient course to everybody here. Of course, if the House had been informed of the proposed postponement I should not object to it.

Mr. STUART: I entirely admit the inconvenience of postponing this Bill from time to time, but it will be remembered, I think, that with the complete approval of the House I took the course when this Bill was first down of proposing its postponement from that time to a later date in the hope that the Royal Commission, which is now sitting on the Water question, would have indicated the solution which it desired to make; and, Sir, I have on more than one occasion taken the same course with respect to this Bill for ex-

actly the same reason, and I, not unnaturally, postponed it until a late date because I, with the rest of the House, had heard rumours afloat that the Commission might report at that time—I believed, by the present occasion. The evidence to be given before the Commission was finished a considerable time ago, and the Commission might reasonably have been expected to report by this time. I am not finding fault with the Commission, but I mean that outsiders might reasonably have expected it to have made its report by this time. But finding it has not done so, and hearing, at any rate, that the Commission will report by the Whitsuntide holidays, and thinking that that is a very reasonable expectation, I have taken the course which has been proposed by the honourable Gentleman who has proposed this date of asking the House to postpone the Bill to the date which he has indicated. The reason of that date is a very simple one, and the reason against taking the Bill now is equally a very simple one. I have no desire to divide the House on this London Water question when the obvious reply to my position would be that a Commission is just about to report, and, therefore, this matter cannot be decided upon its merits. I think, with proper deference to the House and to the Commission, that I ought to maintain that position. I propose to put it off now till immediately after the Whitsuntide holidays. I think honourable Members will admit that it is the first possible day, and, if it be not, I shall be happy to accept any other that is suggested, but I think it is the first possible day after the Whitsuntide holidays. I wish to point out to honourable Gentlemen that this is not such a great postponement in the case of the present Bill as it might be in the case of an ordinary Bill, because it is postponed in the hope that the Commission may have reported favourably—may have reported by that time. Now, if the Commission reports favourably to purchase, which I would hope, at any rate, or in whichever way the Commission reports, it will be observed that a great portion of time, which will be occupied in discussing such a Bill in this House, would take place upon the issue of—Should the purchase take place or not? If there is the Report of the Royal

Commission, after the attitude which all sides of the House have taken upon that question, suppose the Commission reports in favour of purchase, it will scarcely need to be argued. There would be, therefore, merely a question of clauses and the other portions of the Bill. If this Bill had, without the Commission sitting at all, gone on in the ordinary course, and been started at the ordinary time, by the Whitsuntide holidays—and I am speaking with considerable experience as Chairman of Committees—we would not really have got through the main issue of whether purchase should be permitted or not. So postponing it, as I do, till after Whitsuntide in the hope that the Commission will have reported, I believe the Bill will be practically under the same circumstances and in the same condition relatively to the Committee as it would be if this interval of delay had not taken place. I would really appeal to the House not to cut off the last opportunity that there may be for passing this Bill, because if this Bill be dealt with just now, to-day, it is quite obvious that the House will hold, and very fairly argue, if it is dealt with to-day, that the Commission has not reported. But if the Commission should report, and we should be able to deal with it on the 1st June, we have still a very reasonable opportunity of passing the Bill into law. And, Sir, allow me to point out why I desire to have that opportunity and ask the House to support me in getting that opportunity. It is that the sands are running out. There are a large number of Bills which have been passed for various companies—for every company, in fact—within the last five years except the Kent Company. Every company has obtained a Bill giving powers amounting to nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions of money, and with this year to six millions of money; and to a large amount of that is affixed the condition that it shall not affect the value of the companies if purchase takes place within a certain time. Sessions are, therefore, of extreme importance in this matter, and my hope is, if the Commission should report, as I hope it might report, we should be able to save a Session in this important matter, otherwise a very large and serious charge will be thrown upon the people of London, contrary, as I venture to suppose, to the wishes of Com-

mittees of Parliament which have inserted that clause suspending the addition to the companies' value for a period of years in each case. These are the reasons both why I did postpone the Bill and why I do not ask the House to take it just now, and why I hope that the House will not extinguish this possibility. The Bills of the companies have gone on this year, and they are before a Committee, and if I am rightly informed, the Committee has suggested to them to wait a little before they proceed till they see what the Royal Commissioners' Report may be. I think we are all desirous of seeing that, and I think I have shown good reason why we should be left the last chance we can have in this matter. I have taken every opportunity of letting the House know of the postponement by putting it in the public prints, and in other ways I have tried to meet the convenience of the House; but the circumstances are extremely peculiar, and that being so, though the procedure may be somewhat inconvenient—I admit that it is inconvenient, but I say the inconvenience is not one of the creation of the promoters of this Bill—I think it is a reasonable inconvenience under the circumstances of the case. I do not attempt to argue anything about the Bill. I hope I have confined myself solely to the matter of the delay, and under these circumstances I hope the House may be able to support the postponement.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER, Cumberland, Penrith): I think my honourable Friend the Member for West Cumberland was perfectly justified in raising the protest which he has this afternoon. It certainly is very inconvenient to those who are not what I think I may call "in the know" to come down time after time expecting Bills to come on, and then to find that the Bill does not come on, or that by some arrangement between the parties the Bill is dropped or postponed to some future date. I think it must be admitted that that is rather an inconvenient practice.

MR. STUART: Yes.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER: But there are occasions, it seems to me, when that cannot be avoided. I will certainly do what I can to inform my hon-

Mr. Stuart.

ourable Friend, if he will apply to my office, whenever I know myself that a Bill is not coming on which appears on the Papers for a particular day. I have sometimes opportunities of knowing. With regard to this particular case, I think the honourable Member who has just addressed the House has certainly made out a case for the postponement, and that the circumstances which he has narrated, and which certainly I need not go over again, distinguish this Bill from the case of very many other Bills. The main principle of the Bill depends to a great extent upon what the Commission may report. It is quite true if the Commission reported in one direction or the other, so a large number of Members of this House would be influenced either in one direction or the other on the Second Reading of these Bills. Therefore, I do not know on the whole that we lose very much time in postponing this Bill. But I think it should be distinctly understood that on the 1st June we really should see the last of this Bill, and either pass it or reject it. Of course, it is possible, I quite conceive, that by the 1st June the Commission shall not then have reported, and therefore the honourable Member opposite would be able to make exactly the same speech again as he has made this afternoon as to the desirability of postponement, and his arguments would be just as cogent. But then I think it would really be an improper thing, having reached within two months, for we should be then within a period a little over two months of the end of the Session; and I think by that time, on the 1st of June, we ought really to have disposed of the Second Reading of such an important Bill as this, because it must be remembered there are other parties besides the promoters of this Bill who are much interested. The water companies have been kept month after month in a state of doubt as to whether the House means to assent to the Second Reading of this Bill or not. I may point out to my Honourable Friend that one good reason for not proceeding with the Bill to-day is the absence of the opponents. Both the honourable Members whose names are down as opposing this Bill certainly do not expect it to come on, and neither of them is present. I think, under the circumstances, it would certainly be very inadvisable that the House should pro-

ceed this afternoon with the consideration of this Measure, but, on the other hand, I think if the Bill is postponed to the 1st June it should be with the distinct understanding that the House disposes of the Bill then, either by passing it or rejecting it. On that understanding I certainly support the honourable Member in postponing it to the 1st of June.

MR. DUNCOMBE: I am sure I shall have the indulgence of the House in order to say that I shall have no choice but to withdraw my opposition to the postponement of the Bill to-day. At the same time, in doing so, I hope that the practice which has grown up, and which causes not only considerable inconvenience, but a large amount of expense, which must fall on the ratepayers and public companies, will not be repeated; and I should like to make the suggestion that in future, when private business is put down by Order for a certain day, it should be taken on that day. I beg to withdraw.

MR. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.): Can we receive the assurance that the Bill, under these circumstances, will not be postponed beyond the 1st of June? It is an extreme inconvenience to those who are interested to the extent of £40,000,000 in this matter to have it hanging over their heads. Can we not receive an assurance from my honourable Friend who represents the London County Council (Mr. Stuart) that they will deal with the matter in one way or the other on the 1st of June?

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): There is only one word I should like to add. The honourable Member (Mr. Boulnois) has just asked an assurance to be given that the matter shall not be postponed after the 1st of June, and I think what the Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Lowther) stated is absolutely the fact, that we shall be put as *qua* water companies to great expense, and kept in a great state of suspense, unless we are given an assurance that the matter shall be settled, for good or bad, once for all, on the 1st June. There is another matter I wish to raise on the speech of the honourable Member for Shoreditch (Mr. Stuart). He stated, what is perfectly true, that the Committee sitting on the Bill of the East London Water Company had postponed

their sittings because they seem to have expressed the opinion that we should not proceed with our Bill pending the Report of the Royal Commission. What I wish to impress upon the House is that we are in no way parties to that postponement. I myself look upon it, I was going to say, with consternation, but I will not use so strong a word, but I feel very strongly on this keeping back of the Bill pending the Report of the Royal Commission. I would not allow it to be thought for a moment that the East London Water Company are in any way a party to that postponement.

MR. STUART: I feel it will be quite obvious to the House generally why I do not pledge myself to the suggestion that has been made, but it will be quite plain that the arguments I have used to-day for taking this Bill on the 1st of June and the possibility of doing it will be evanescent in their character. I cannot repeat those arguments with effect to the House, because the obvious answer is that we have not time to do it. But if I were to give a distinct pledge at the present moment that on the 1st of June I would take this Bill, whatever happened, it will be obvious that I might be landed in this difficulty—the Commissioners' Report might be out on that day. I say it is a very probable thing, for it is just after the Whitsuntide holidays, and I might be forced to take this Bill on the 1st of June on the pledge that I made to take it on that day. But I may say that I obviously cannot ask the House to continue to postpone the Bill in this way, and I think, not pledging myself, for the reasons I have given, in this matter, and pointing out clearly that I should not be able to give good reasons for a further postponement, with that statement I think the honourable Gentlemen on the other side who have asked the question might fairly be satisfied.

SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): As Chairman of the Committee on the East London Water Bill I would just say a word. I am not going into the merits of the question before the Committee, but the honourable and gallant Gentleman opposite has hardly made a correct statement of what occurred in that Committee. The Committee expressed their view of the difficulties they were in with regard to the

question of dealing with the Bill in the face of the Commission sitting, and at the request of the counsel for the company we adjourned until Monday week, and I reported that to the House in due course.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: Not at the request of my company; after the expression of the opinion of the Committee it was adjourned.

SIR J. PEASE: The Committee had not adjourned till after the request of the counsel for the Company.

The Motion to adjourn the Second Reading of the Bill was then agreed to without a Division.

LONDON WATER (FINANCE) BILL.

(By Order.)

Order for the Second Reading read.

MR. STUART offered to postpone till 1st June the Motion—

"That Standing Order 194 be suspended in the case of the London Water (Finance) Bill."

MR. SPEAKER: After the discussion that has taken place I think I should state at once that I should have to inform the House that this Bill was not properly before them. It is in breach of Standing Order 194, and that will not be cured by the Motion that Standing Order 194 be suspended. It is not a proper course to introduce this Bill as a Private Bill, which by the Standing Order cannot be introduced as a Private Bill, and then to say that it is properly introduced, and that on the Motion that it be read a second time the Standing Order be suspended. The proper course is to bring it in as a Public Bill, if the Standing Order so requires it, and, having brought it in as a Public Bill, ask the House to take any course the honourable Member may think fit to take to carry out the object of the Bill; but I should be obliged to tell the House when it came on for Second Reading that I must decline to put it.

MR. STUART: On the point of Order I think I follow you, Sir; understanding that the Bill cannot be introduced as a Private Bill, and therefore it cannot be proceeded with so far as the Standing Order has been suspended for the purpose. But if the Standing Order has been suspended, then the Bill either introduced as a Public Bill or in some

other way with which you are familiar, in accordance with the forms of the House, it can then be proceeded with, and could be introduced owing to the suspension of the Standing Order. The Standing Order is first to be suspended, and then the Bill introduced and proceeded with.

MR. SPEAKER: If there were an Order made by the House for the Private Bill, suspending the Standing Order, then the Bill proposed to be brought in might be introduced, but that must be done before any steps are taken. That could not apply to this Bill.

Bill withdrawn.

BROMPTON AND PICCADILLY CIRCUS RAILWAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

BAKER STREET AND WATERLOO RAILWAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY BILL.

Reported with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

KEW BRIDGE BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

NORFOLK ESTUARY BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

WORKMEN'S HOUSES TENURE BILL.

Second Reading deferred from tomorrow till Wednesday next.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill intituled, "An Act to empower the county councils of the administrative counties of Middlesex and Surrey to raise further moneys for the purposes of The Kew Bridge Act, 1898." [Kew Bridge Bill [H.L.]]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend The Norfolk Estuary Bill, 1877." [Norfolk Estuary Bill [H.L.]]

Mr. J. A. Pease.

PETITIONS.**ECCLESIASTICAL ASSESSMENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL, TEINDS (SCOTLAND) BILL, AND PARISH CHURCHES (SCOTLAND).**

Petitions against proposed legislation;—From Kincardine; and, Aberdeen; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND RENTS (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Petitions in favour;—From Haslingden; Padiham; Guisborough; and, Chipping Wycombe; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND VALUES (TAXATION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, against; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Kincardine O'Neil; Perth (two); Aberdeen (two); Stonehaven; Bonnyrigg; Baillieston; Port Bannatyne; Alloa; Alva; Penicuik; Blairgowrie; Cooper Angus; Duns; Wishaw; Stockport; Govan; and, Pollokshaws; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Glasswell; Hickleton Main; Townbent; Low Laithes; Ossett; East Ardsley; Wharfedale; Grassmoor; Avenue; Brotton; North Skelton; Lewden; and, Burnley and Prince of Wales' Pontefract Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Cathcart, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Incorporated Society of Law Agents in Scotland; and, Glasgow; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Sanitary Institute; and, Bacup; to lie upon the Table.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Southport; Derby; Glasgow; West Hartlepool; King's Lynn; Newcastle-on-Tyne; Worcester; Neasden; Bradford; Stafford; Manchester; Brighton; and, Grantham; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Colne; Tamworth; Beverley; and, Preston; to lie upon the Table.

SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition of the Sanitary Institute, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SMALL HOUSES (ACQUISITION OF OWNERSHIP) BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, against; to lie upon the Table.

TEMPERANCE REFORM (THREEFOLD OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Glasgow; Aberdeen; Coatbridge (two); and, Dalmarnock (two); to lie upon the Table.

TOWN COUNCILS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Inverness, against; to lie upon the Table.

WORKMEN'S HOUSES TENURE BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, against; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.**EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).**

Copy presented,—of Minute of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 27th April 1899, providing for the distribution of the sum available for Secondary or Technical (including Agricultural) Education under the Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1898 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.

Account presented,—of the Gross Public Income and Expenditure in the year ended 31st March 1899, together with the Balances in the Exchequer at the

commencement and at the termination of the year, and the Amounts received into or issued from the Exchequer in respect of Funded and Unfunded Debt created or redeemed in the said year (by Act); to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 170.)

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented,—of Treasury Minute, dated 21st April 1899, declaring that David Pollock, Rural Postman at Ardrossan, Post Office Department, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate, through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department (by Act); to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (EVENING CONTINUATION SCHOOLS).

Copy presented,—of Code of Regulations for Evening Continuation Schools, with Explanatory Memorandum, Schedule, and Appendices by the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND).

Copy presented,—of Return of the number of Evictions in Ireland for the quarter ended 31st March 1899 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House:—

JUDICIAL TRUSTEE RULES.

Copy of Additional Rule made by the Lord Chancellor under the Judicial Trustees Act, 1896 [by Act].

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WARNED.

Copy ordered, “of Quarterly Returns, by counties, of the Public Elementary Schools (1) which have been warned by the Education Department under Article 86 of the Code, including schools from which the grant has been withheld under that article; (2) which have been warned by the Education Department that the annual grant will, in future, be withheld unless defects in the school premises are remedied; (3) the annual grants to which have been suspended for three months or more from the date of the receipt by the Education Department of the inspector's report on account of defects in school premises (in

continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 192, of Session 1898).”—(*Sir Francis Powell.*)

SUGAR (BOUNTIES, ETC.)

Return ordered, “of all the Bounties, direct and indirect, on the production or export of Sugar given by France, Germany, and Austria, supplemented by a Copy of the Circular issued by the Secretary to the United States Treasury on the 12th day of December 1898, giving particulars of the Sugar Bounties, direct and indirect, given by the principal Continental Countries.”—(*Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

QUESTIONS.

MEDICAL AND EDUCATIONAL GRANTS.

MR. DILLON (for Mr. MacNEILL) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the reason for the delay in sending to the clerks of unions, now the clerks of boards of guardians, the usual forms to be perfected before the payment of Parliamentary grants towards medical and educational purposes usually payable in February; and, whether it is the intention of the Government to deprive the several Poor Law Boards in Ireland of the grant payable in February, 1899, and which accrued between September, 1898, and February, 1899, before the new arrangements under the Local Government Board Act had come into operation?

MR. G. BALFOUR: At the request of my right honourable Friend I will answer this Question. There is, needless to say, no foundation for the suggestion in the second paragraph. The forms for a return of the medical and educational expenditure incurred by boards of guardians during the half year ended 25th of March were sent out yesterday. There has been no delay in the dispatch of these forms. Recoupment will be made when the required particulars have been furnished by the several unions.

PROPERTY PURCHASES BY IRISH CONSTABLES.

MR. DILLON (for Mr. Davitt) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether it is in accordance with the regulations of

the Royal Irish Constabulary for a constable serving, but not permanently residing in a county, to bid for houses or farms which are set up for auction in such county; whether he is aware that a constable, M'Whirtor, has recently bid for and purchased a house in Cashel, county Tipperary, offering a larger amount for the property than that tendered by the occupant of the premises; and whether he will make inquiries into the matter?

MR. G. BALFOUR: The Constabulary Regulations do not prohibit a member of the force from purchasing a house or farm, though if he purchased any such property in the county in which he was serving, the Regulations would not permit him to remain in that county. The constable named in the Question (Constable M'Whirtor) recently bid for a house at Cashel and was declared the purchaser. The occupant of the house did not, I am informed, make any bid for the premises.

NAVAL WORKS.

SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether he can give to the House any explanations of the continued retardation in the execution of Naval works; and what progress is being made at Gibraltar, as compared with the promises made to the House on the Naval Works Bill of 1895, 1896 and 1897, as well as in the Session of 1898?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): It is not possible to give a full reply to the inquiries of the right honourable Baronet within the limits of an Answer to a Question. For the explanation of the difference between estimates and expenditure in the year mentioned in the Question, I must refer the right honourable Gentleman to my Statement on the Estimates last year. The progress made at Gibraltar during the last financial year is described in the First Lord's Statement, circulated with the Estimates for the current year. It has fully come up to our expectations, and I see no reason to doubt that the contractors will finish the work within the contract time. The dates for completion are given in the Statement.

ARMING OF THE IRISH CONSTABULARY

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): On behalf of Mr. Field, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Government have in contemplation the supplying of new rifles to the Royal Irish Constabulary; and, if so, whether any special circumstances have caused such a policy to be desirable; whether he can state the precise difference between the rifle at present in use and that proposed to be substituted therefor; and in what respect is the new rifle supposed to be of more practical utility in Ireland than that at present in use; whether he can state how often during the past 10 years have the Royal Irish Constabulary been obliged to use their rifles in the discharge of their duty, and on what occasions; and what is the estimated cost of the new rifles, and from what fund is it proposed to be defrayed?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND (Mr. GERALD W. BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): It is proposed to supply Martini-Henry carbines to the constabulary in lieu of the Snider carbines with which the force is now armed. The Snider carbines have been in use for nearly 40 years, and many of these weapons have become unfitted for use owing to incrustations of rust and other defects, which render them a source of danger to the men. The Martini-Henry carbine is a modern weapon, and is much less liable to get out of order than the Snider carbine. During the past 10 years the constabulary have been obliged to use their rifles in the discharge of their duties on 14 occasions—namely, twice at evictions, when the police and sheriff's officers were fired at, seven times on the occasion of moonlighting outrages, three times during affrays between water bailiffs and poachers, once during a riot, and once when a land agent and his police escort were fired at. The new carbine will be supplied by the War Department free of charge.

VACCINATION ACT OF 1898.

MR. HEDDERWICK (Wick Burghs): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will grant a Return showing the number of certificates of exemption from vaccination allowed since the Vaccination Act of 1898 came into operation?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): A Return on the subject of certificate exemption from vaccination has been issued to-day. It relates to all certificates of conscientious objections delivered to vaccination officers up to the 31st December last. It is too early to call for a further Return with any public advantage at present.

ELECTRICAL COMMUNICATION WITH LIGHTHOUSES.

Mr. C. McARTHUR (Liverpool, Exchange): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state how the provisions of section 2, sub-section (5), of the Merchant Shipping (Mercantile Marine Fund) Act, 1898, permitting the use of electrical communications with lighthouses for private messages at reasonable charges are to be made operative; and whether it is intended to issue a scale of charges for the transmission of such messages; and, if so, when the publication of the scale may be looked for?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): As the honourable Member is aware, electrical communication with light stations can only be made available for private messages, so far as they may be compatible with the efficiency and safety of the lighthouse service. This involves many considerations and communication with other departments. The matter is receiving careful attention, but I am unable to give any particulars at present.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS BILL.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can now state what course he intends to pursue with regard to the Regulation of Railways Bill?

Mr. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can yet state definitely the course he proposes to take in reference to the Regulation of Railways Bill; and, in the event of his final decision being unfavourable to the Measure, will he withdraw the Bill at such an hour as will afford honourable Members an opportunity of expressing their sense of the circumstances that have led to this abandonment?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I am afraid I must abandon the hope of proceeding with the Regulation of Railways Bill this Session, but a Royal Commission will be at once appointed to make inquiry into all cases of accidents, fatal or non-fatal, to servants of railway companies and truck owners, with the view to adopting means to reduce the number of such accidents. The inquiry will not only embrace such matters as are dealt with in the Bill, but the adoption of any other safety appliances.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS: May I ask whether the right honourable Gentleman did not, in his reply to Mr. Maddison, promise to endeavour to pass the Bill through a Second Reading and refer it to a Select Committee?

THE SPEAKER: Order, Order! That is raising a discussion on an answer given.

Mr. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I should like to know whether the non-contentious clauses could not be passed?

SIR FORTESCUE FLANNERY (Yorkshire, Shipley): Is it not a fact that according to the Return in the year 1898, 500 railway servants were killed?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. D. A. THOMAS: I beg to ask whether the action of the Government is not an attempt to burke this question in the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! That is a complaint which cannot be made in this House.

SIR FORTESCUE FLANNERY: Will the reference to the Royal Commission include all classes of accidents to railway servants, not to shunters only?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: It will. At one time I had hoped to embody the so-called non-contentious clauses in the Bill, but I have received so many indications that some of these clauses are contentious, and, having regard to the time at the disposal of the House, it will not be possible to pass it. As there is to be a Royal Commission, I believe it will not be disagreeable to have these clauses, as well as others, referred to.

PUPIL TEACHERS.

MR. A. HUTTON (York, W.R., Morley): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education how many pupil teachers have been presented during the last three years at the scholarship examinations; how many have failed; and in how many cases have the Education Department used the powers under Articles 34 and 64 of the Code to disqualify any managers or any teachers from being entrusted with the training of pupil teachers?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (Sir J. Gorst, Cambridge University): Pupil teachers entering for the Queen's scholarship examinations are not distinguished in the departmental records from other candidates, and the numbers cannot at once be given. One set of managers have within the last three years been disqualified under Article 34, and inquiries have been made, and warnings given, in many other cases. There has within the same period been one case of suspension of the right to superintend pupil teachers under the note to Article 64.

SCOTCH POOR LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS.

SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, Bridge-ton): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the law of Scotland as to the tenure of office by Poor Law medical officers differs from that of England; and whether he would consent to lay upon the Table a Return showing the instances in which since the coming into operation of the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1894, Poor Law medical officers have been dismissed or compelled to resign in consequence of a too conscientious performance of their duties?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): The reply to the first paragraph of the honourable Member's Question is in the affirmative. As regards the second part, the Secretary for Scotland considers that it would not be possible to prepare a Return in the form proposed by the honourable Member.

POST OFFICE AND TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANK.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state the present total liabilities of the State in respect of deposits in the Post Office Savings Banks and the Trustee Savings Banks; whether these deposits are liable to withdrawal at call or at a short notice; and, if at a short notice, at what notice; what assets are held by the Savings Banks to meet their liabilities, and in what form; are the assets held in the shape of securities valued at the price at which those securities were bought, or are they valued at the market price of the day; what is the amount of that part of the securities thus held that consists of stock which, as he states in his Treasury Minute of 11th April 1899, must in ordinary course be purchasable at par in or before 1923; and has any provision been made to provide for the constant diminution in value of these securities as thus contemplated as between their present market price and the par price at which he suggests that they must be purchasable in 1923?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I informed the honourable Member for Islington, in reply to a Question on 7th March last, that the total liability of the State to depositors in the Savings Banks at the last date to which the accounts were made up was £173,780,000 in round figures. The legal notice of withdrawal from the Post Office Savings Banks is 10 days; in the Trustee Savings Banks it varies with the rules of the banks. The honourable Member will find a statement of the assets, valued at market price, in the Report of the Postmaster-General and Return No. 64 of 1899; they include £102,697,000 Consols. The total assets, valued at par, show, as I stated on 7th March, a surplus over the liabilities.

SAVINGS BANK SYSTEM.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is still the case, as he stated on 16th April 1896, that the State actually incurs a loss by receiving Savings Bank deposits, and that the

Government loses in order to enable depositors, who belong to quite another class than the working classes, to obtain a larger interest for their money than they can obtain from the ordinary banks; whether he has carried out his undertaking, given on the same day, to carefully bear in mind this matter as well as his own suggestion that before long it might become necessary for him to propose some alteration in the existing law, which might have the effect of preventing the abuse of the Savings Bank system; whether he has accordingly carefully borne this matter in mind during the past three years; and whether he now intends to propose either any such alteration in the law as he then suggested, or any other alteration in this respect?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I do not think that the first paragraph of the honourable Member's Question quite fairly represents either what I said in 1896 or the facts of the case; but I may say that, in considering the matter since that time, I have found reason to believe that the proportion of depositors in the Savings Banks who could not properly be considered to belong to the working classes is smaller than I then supposed. If the honourable Member desires to know my views on the subject and the reasons why I have not made any proposal with regard to it, he will find them stated in discussions that have since taken place on the Vote for making good the deficiency in the income of the Savings Banks—the last occasion was, I think, in February of the present year.

THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in accepting the invitation of H.I.M. the Tsar to the Conference to consider the possibility of limiting armaments, Her Majesty's Government have followed the course adopted by Lord Derby in 1874 by instructing its delegate not to entertain in any shape, directly or indirectly, anything relating to maritime operations or naval warfare, and not to be led into any discussion which may, however remotely, affect

those operations or that warfare; whether he can now state what conditions, if any, have been made by Her Majesty's Government in accepting the invitation to the Conference; and what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to secure this country against the adoption of any conclusions which might be calculated to impair the future development or the present exercise of the full naval power of Great Britain in time of war?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. St. JOHN BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): I fear I can only state, as I have already done in reply to a Question on the subject of the Peace Conference, that it is not expedient to make any public announcement as to the instructions to be given to the British delegates.

REORGANISATION OF THE WAR OFFICE.

GENERAL RUSSELL (Cheltenham): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he has any objection to state the terms of reference submitted to the Departmental Committee appointed to consider the reorganisation of the War Office in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee presided over by the late Under Secretary?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): The Committee has been appointed to consider the numbers and constitution of the clerical establishment of the War Office, and to inquire how far it may be possible, by a better distribution and devolution of work and by the amalgamation of subdivisions, to effect reductions in the present clerical staff.

ZAMBEZI RIVER TO LAKE NYASSA RAILWAY.

MR. STANLEY (Lambeth, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the delay in proceeding with the construction of the railway from the Zambesi River to Lake Nyassa, the route for

which was surveyed some time ago at the instance of Her Majesty's Government, is causing great inconvenience and alarm to the white inhabitants of the British Central African Protectorate; and whether, as the fate of the country may be said to depend upon this railway, he can give some indication as to the intentions of the Government in regard to commencing the work?

MR. BRODRICK: Some delay has occurred in furnishing the details of the survey which was undertaken on behalf of the Government. They have been reported on by the Crown agents, and the question of the railway will shortly be considered by Her Majesty's Government.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS IN IRELAND.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any official inquiry has recently been made into the working of the Industrial schools in Ireland; what was the nature of the inquiry; whether the manager of the schools received any intimation that such an inquiry was being held; and whether any official connected with the administration of industrial schools in England visited Dublin in connection with this inquiry; and, if so, with what object?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: An inquiry was held in October and November, 1897, into a variety of matters connected with the administration and practice of the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Office in Ireland. The Committee appointed to conduct the inquiry consisted of Mr. Holmes, the Treasury Remembrancer, Mr. Fagan, the Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools in Ireland, and Mr. Robertson, Assistant-Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools in Great Britain. The inquiry was an inter-departmental one, and no intimation of the holding of the inquiry was given to the managers of the schools.

CAPE TO CAIRO RAILWAY.

MR. T. BAYLEY: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is in a position to state if the Government has now decided to give any guarantee of any portion of the railway proposed by Mr. Cecil Rhodes to connect the Cape with Cairo, or of any other proposed new railway in Africa?

MR. DILLON: Before the right honourable Gentleman answers the question, may I ask whether his attention has been directed to a leader in the "Times" of this morning, and whether the statement there made with regard to the intentions of the Government with regard to guaranteeing a portion of the railway is correct?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER: I have not seen the article, and therefore cannot give an answer to that Question. We have no proposal now before us for a guarantee of any new railway in Africa. The proposal before us relates solely to the existing Bechuanaland Railway from Mafeking to Bulawayo, and communications are still proceeding with regard to it.

SENTENCE ON SATYANATH MAHAPATRA.

MR. H. ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the sentence of two years' imprisonment recently passed, under section 417 of the Indian Penal Code, upon Satyanath Mahapatra by the Deputy Commissioner of Singbhum, who himself instituted the prosecution; whether he is aware that the Judicial Commissioner of Chota Nagpur has, on being appealed to, set aside the conviction and directed a re-trial of the accused, on the grounds that the maximum punishment under the section referred to was one year's imprisonment; that the accused had not been given an opportunity of claiming a transfer of his case to another court; and that such a case should be tried by some competent magistrate other than the Deputy Commissioner; and whether he will inquire into the circumstances of the case?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord George HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I have received no information on the subject of the case to which the honourable Member's Question refers, nor have I observed any reference to it in the public Press. It would appear from the terms of the Question that if any judicial error was committed, it was set right on appeal, and I do not propose to take any action in the matter.

AMERICAN MAIL CONTRACT.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether he is aware that the British mails to New York were dispatched from Liverpool on 12th instant by the White Star cattle ship "Cymric," and only arrived in New York on the 22nd, three days after the Continental mails, which left Southampton also on the 12th, and which arrived in New York on the 19th; that the Cunard steamship "Umbria," and another liner, which sailed three days after the "Cymric," reached New York the same day as she did; whether the Continental mails via Southampton do, on the average, arrive in New York in advance of the British mails sent from Liverpool the same day; and whether, as British business is by these arrangements seriously handicapped against Continentals, any alterations can be made in them?

MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrews Burghs) (for Mr. HANBURY): The Postmaster-General has not yet received any information from the New York Post Office as to the times at which the vessels referred to arrived at New York; but, according to reports in the newspapers, the "Kaiser Friedrich," conveying mails embarked at Southampton on the 12th instant, arrived at New York on the 19th, between two and three days earlier than the British packet "Cymric," which carried mails embarked at Queenstown on the 13th. The reports also show that the Cunard packet "Umbria," which left Queenstown on the 16th instant, and the American packet "New York," which left Southampton on the 15th, arrived at New York on the same day as the "Cymric." The White Star Company,

however, state that their steamer arrived off Fire Island at 1 a.m. on the 22nd—not at 10 a.m. as reported—so that the correspondence carried by her should have been delivered the same morning, whereas that carried by the two other vessels, which arrived in the afternoon, would not be delivered in New York until the following Monday morning. Although the "Cymric" carries cattle from New York to this country, that fact does not affect her speed; and from this country to New York she is an ordinary passenger and cargo steamer and does not carry any cattle. She is not, however, regularly employed in the mail service, but had to be used on this occasion in place of the "Germanic," which sank in New York Harbour in February, and which, although refloated, it is not yet again fit for the mail and passenger service. She is, however, expected to resume her place shortly. It is the fact that the foreign packets starting from Southampton on the same days as the British packets leave Liverpool (i.e., the day before they leave Queenstown) more frequently reach New York before than after the British packets; but the correspondence carried from Queenstown includes practically letters posted a day later than that carried from Southampton. It should be remembered that, on the exceptional occasions on which a comparatively slow steamer has to be employed in the British service, the senders of the letters can, by using a special superscription, have them forwarded by another steamer.

MR. A. THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.): Is it not the fact that the mails from Southampton arrive in New York two or three days before the mails starting from Liverpool?

MR. ANSTRUTHER: I think I should be unwise to add anything to the reply I have just given.

SAVAGE SOUTH AFRICA IN LONDON.

SIR R. REID (Dumfries Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Governments of the Cape, Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal have expressed disapproval of the recent introduction of native men and women

into this country for the show called "Savage South Africa in London," as injurious to themselves and the South African population, and whether the High Commissioner has conveyed to the Colonial Office his concurrence in that disapproval; and whether the correspondence between the High Commissioner and the Cape Government can be laid before the House?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): The answer to both questions in the first part of the Question is Yes, and I may add that I entirely concur in their opinions. I do not propose to lay the correspondence before the House, but the honourable Member can see it at the Colonial Office if he desires to do so.

JUBILEE FUND OF THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

Mr. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that at a recent meeting of the Committee of Management of the Queen's Jubilee Fund in Dublin the police pensioners, who are subscribers to the fund, had not proper representation; and if at future meetings of this Committee, at least one police pensioner from each county will be allowed to be present to take part in the deliberations?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The rules governing the Queen's Jubilee Fund of the Royal Irish Constabulary do not provide for the representation of pensioners on the Committee of Management. Consequently pensioners were not represented at the meeting referred to. The fund is not a public fund, and the question of the representation of pensioners on the committee is one for determination by that body and the Board of Headquarters Officers.

SEVEN-DAY NEWSPAPERS.

Sir M. STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I beg to ask the Secretary for the Home Department whether, in view of the new issue of seven-day newspapers, amounting at present to an initial issue

of one-half to a million, and the consequent Sunday employment of thousands of hands in their distribution, he will receive a deputation on the subject, so that the complete facts of the case may be laid before him, more especially as information has already been given to the Government on one side of the question by one of the largest of the Sunday newspapers?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir M. WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): I am quite in sympathy with my honourable Friend in deprecating any unnecessary increase of Sunday labour. In this case the facts appear to be in dispute. I do not know what action he suggests that the Government should take—nor, in fact, can the Government take any action. I shall be ready, however, to receive a small deputation, if my honourable Friend thinks he can supply me with reliable information on a subject which is of considerable public interest.

ADMIRALTY EMPLOYEES.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty will he explain why armourers and blacksmiths are not eligible in accordance with the Queen's regulations to become engine-room artificers; and whether a blacksmith serving in the Royal Navy, and borne on the books of Her Majesty's ships at Devonport, has recently been examined with a view to being appointed as an acting engine-room artificer; if so, will he state what was the result of the examination?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: I shall be glad if the honourable Member will postpone this question.

WINE DUTY.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if, having regard to the unanimous support given by Colonial Governments, through their Agents General, to the suggestion of the United Empire Trade League that wine produced in and imported from British Colonies and Dependencies should be

exempt from the new duty, he will yield to the general desire and abstain from levying the new duty upon wine produced in and imported from the British Empire?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The Agents General of the Colonies have placed their views on this subject before me. The two Colonies practically interested in the increase of the wine duties appear to be Victoria and South Australia. I am considering the statements that were made as to the special circumstances of the wine trade of these Colonies and the mode in which it is affected by the rates of duty proposed. But that trade has grown up under a long-established system of equal duties which, even when increased, will be very small as compared with the Customs duty on wine levied by the Colonies named. The return to differential duties would be a change of great importance in our fiscal system, and even if the principle of such a change were accepted I do not see why the benefit of it should be extended to Colonies which levy a highly-protective tariff on the manufactures of the United Kingdom.

IRISH TITHE RENT-CHARGE BILL.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can give an undertaking that the Irish Tithe Rent-Charge Bill will not be introduced till after Whitsuntide, and that it will not be introduced under the 10 minutes' rule?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am afraid I must decline to give the undertaking asked for.

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

MR. GODDARD (Ipswich): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will grant the Return of Public Elementary Schools in England and Wales, with the number of scholars provided for and in attendance, and the particulars of income and expenditure, similar to the Return presented in 1894 (C. 7529) which has been placed on the Paper?

SIR J. GORST: The Return asked for is a very costly one, and the particulars required, except as regards income and expenditure, are included in the annual Report of the Committee of the Council. But the propriety of granting the Return will be carefully considered.

SHOP CLUBS.

MR. J. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is proposed to introduce a Bill this Session to carry out the recommendations of the Departmental Committee which inquired into the subject of Compulsory Shop Clubs?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: I beg to refer the honourable Member to an answer given by me to a similar Question a week ago. I cannot see my way to introduce such a Bill this Session.

CANTON-HAN-KAU RAILWAY.

MR. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Société d'Etude des Chemins de Fer en Chine, otherwise the Franco-Belgian Syndicate, has, in the event of the contract with the American syndicate for the Canton-Han-kau line falling to the ground, a preferential right to obtain the said contract; whether Sir Claude Macdonald in October last requested the Tsung-li-Yamen to give the first refusal of the said contract to the Anglo-Eastern syndicate in the event of the agreement concluded with the American syndicate coming to an end from any cause; whether he can say how it is the Anglo-Eastern syndicate failed to obtain the right which they applied for, and why it was given to the Franco-Belgian syndicate; and whether such a proceeding is in accordance with the claims put forward by the Government on behalf of Great Britain in the Yang-tze region?

MR. BRODRICK: We have no information that the Belgian syndicate has acquired any reversionary rights in connection with the Han-kau-Canton line.

Sir C. Macdonald requested the Chinese Government to negotiate first with the Anglo-Eastern syndicate in the event of the abandonment from any cause of the American agreement, to which the Yamen replied that in such event they would consider and deal with the matter.

MR. YERBURGH: May I ask the right honourable Gentleman whether he is aware that the Franco-Belgian syndicate stated in their prospectus that they had obtained that privilege?

[No Reply.]

HYDROPHOBIA IN INDIA

SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether, between July 1898 and March 1899, 33 soldiers have been sent from India to the Pasteur Institute at Paris to be treated for hydrophobia; and, if so, at what cost to the State and with what result; and whether he will obtain the figures showing how many cases of death from hydrophobia have been reported in the Indian Army during the last ten years previous to these dates?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: The reply to the first part of the honourable Member's Question is "Yes." The payments in this country on this account were about £10 a man, and the results have been, so far as I am aware, very satisfactory. I have no information as to the total payments in India. In the 10 years from 1888 to 1897 there were 23 deaths of British soldiers in India from hydrophobia.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that Buisson baths have been established at various centres in India for the sudorific treatment of persons bitten by dogs supposed to be suffering from rabies; and whether a trial has been given to these baths by the Indian medical authorities; if so, with what result?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: I am aware that Buisson baths

have been established in India; but the opinions of the Indian medical authorities, so far as they have been received, are not favourable as to the efficacy of this form of treatment of hydrophobia.

INDIAN SUGAR DUTIES ACT.

MR. MACLEAN (Cardiff): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether it will be possible for bounty-giving States, under the promised exemption of British goods from the Indian Sugar Duties Act, to render the Act inoperative by sending to this country goods intended for the Indian market, and transshipping them at London or Southampton into British vessels bound for Bombay?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: My honourable Friend is mistaken in supposing that any exemption of British goods from the operation of the Indian Sugar Duties Act has been promised. That Act will be administered, necessarily, by the Government of India, who must deal with cases as they arise, by the light of experience and according to circumstances. I stated on the 18th, and again on 20th April, that, in view of the comparatively small amount of the export of confectionery from this country to India, and of the difficulty of estimating the quantity of sugar in a given quantity of confectionery, I did not think it likely that the Government of India would in this case insist upon their rights. But it is certain that they will grant no exemption which would have the effect described in my honourable Friend's Question, and it is equally certain that there would be no difficulty whatever in framing regulations which would effectively prevent any wholesale evasion of the duty as is suggested.

MR. MACLEAN: Can the noble Lord say how the Customs House authorities in India are to distinguish between goods sent in British ships in regard to the places where they come from?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: Yes, sir. I believe it is the practice to state on the packages the original port of shipment.

RECRUITING IN CANADA.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether his attention has been called to the statement contained in the report of Major-General Hutton to the Canadian Government to the effect that a proposal has been made by the Imperial Government that recruiting for the 100th Regiment (Royal Canadians) shall be open to British subjects in the Dominion of Canada, and that complete arrangements for carrying this out have been prepared; whether this statement was made by authority of the War Office; what steps, if any, have actually been taken in the direction indicated; and whether the early withdrawal from Canada of the 100th Regiment (Royal Canadians) is taken with a view of recruiting the regiment?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: The Secretary of State has not yet received Major-General Hutton's Report, and the War Office has not authorised any such statement as that referred to in the Question. We are in communication with the Dominion Government as to recruiting in Canada, but the arrangements, which I am glad to say are progressing satisfactorily, are not sufficiently advanced for any statement to be made. The early withdrawal of the 1st Battalion of the Leinster Regiment from Canada will be in the ordinary course of reliefs.

WRIGHT, LEEDS POST OFFICE.

MR. LEUTY (Leeds, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether his attention has been drawn to the case of a person named Wright, who, after having been dismissed from the post office at Leeds, was offered the alternative of resignation; and whether the complaint against him being of a character to justify the offer of acceptance of his resignation, some allowance could be made to him in lieu of the pension he had gone so far towards attaining, having served in the Department of the Post Office for a period of 24 years?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's) (for Mr. HANBURY): The case of Wright has been under consideration on several occasions

since dismissal, but the Postmaster-General sees no reason to alter the view originally taken, namely, that Wright's conduct had been such as to render him unfit for further employment in the public service. In the circumstances it would be out of the Postmaster-General's power to give the certificate of good conduct, without which by law no pension can be given to a public servant.

OYSTER FISHERIES.

MR. PRETYMAN (Suffolk, Woodbridge): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, when he proposes to introduce his Bill restricting the sale of oysters from polluted layings?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD: A Bill is ready for introduction, and I propose that it should be introduced in the House of Lords.

LAND TAX.

SIR J. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, when land tax has been paid by persons whose incomes do not exceed £160 a year by mistake, owing to ignorance of the law, the Board of Inland Revenue refuse to allow repayment of the amount of land tax so paid; and, if this is so, whether he will consider the matter and allow repayment of land tax to be claimed?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The power of the Board of Inland Revenue to grant relief from the land tax under section 12 of the Finance Act of 1898 is distinctly limited by the terms of the section to cases where the claim to exemption or abatement of income-tax is established before the land tax is paid. There is no provision in the section for repayment of land tax, and the introduction of a system for allowing claims for such repayment would largely increase the labour and the cost of applying the concession. If any persons have omitted to claim the benefit of the section during the past year they should take care to apply in good time in future years.

THE VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS ACT, 1897.

MR. McKENNA (Monmouth, N.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether any money out of the aid grant under the Voluntary Schools Act, 1897, has been allotted to Voluntary schools in the following London parishes—St. George's, Hanover Square, St. Peter's, Eaton Square, and St. Michael's, Chester Square; and, if so, at what rate per scholar in average attendance?

SIR J. GORST: In the financial year 1897-98 aid grants were paid at the following rates:—To St. George's, Hanover Square (Hanover Branch) National School, at 5s. per scholar in average attendance; to St. George's, Hanover Square, United National School, at 3s. 4d.; to Pimlico, St. Michael's National School, at 3s. 6½d.; to Pimlico, St. Peter's National School, at 3s. 6d. In the financial year 1898-99 aid grants were paid to the two former schools at 6s. 1½d. and 3s. 4d. respectively, while no aid grant was paid either of the two latter schools.

POST OFFICE REGULATIONS.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether the decision of the Post Office, that in cases where an officer has performed the duty of a superior officer continuously for more than nine months he shall, during the continuance of such employment, receive the difference between his own pay and the minimum of the class in which he is doing substitute duty, provided that such allowance shall in no case exceed £20 a year, is being carried out; will he explain why two clerks at Manchester performed assistant superintendents' duties for 12 months, but were refused the minimum salary of an assistant superintendent for the three months in excess of the time.

MR. ANSTRUTHER (for Mr. Hanbury): The decision is being carried out. In the case of the two clerks at Manchester to which the honourable Member referred, it was under a misapprehension that the decision was not acted upon. The matter is now being put right.

PAYMENT FOR SCHOOL STATIONERY.

MR. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education what action has been taken by the Education Department with reference to the complaint of Mr. Edward Francis, of Flint, who has represented to the Department that his son John Oswald Francis was removed to a lower standard owing to non-payment for school stationery; whether the Department has taken any, and, if so, what action on the representation of Mr. R. T. Price that between the 17th and 20th February last his child, Maud Price, aged 9, was sent home twice with a message to bring to school the next morning money to pay for school stationery, and that on returning the following morning without the money she was caned; what action has been taken by the Department in the case of Mr. Edward Shaw, of 39 Mount Street, Flint, who has complained to the Department that his children have been sent home from school for money to pay for school stationery, and when the money was not sent the children were caned; whether in any, and, if so, which of these cases a charge of school stationery could be legally made; and whether such charge could be legally levied or not, do the Department sanction the punishment of children because their parents have not provided them with money to pay for school stationery?

SIR J. GORST: The Committee of the Council are assured by the managers that John Oswald Francis was not removed to a lower standard for the caused alleged in the Question, but failed to obtain promotion owing to his low attendance and irregular attendance consequent upon employment in a grocer's shop. The Committee of the Council are also informed that Maud Price was absent from school from February 8th to February 21st, and therefore could not have been caned on the date in question. They are also informed that the children of Mr. Shaw were not caned for the cause alleged; but inquiry in the Maud Price and Shaw cases is still proceeding. The charge for stationery was legal in all the cases named, but was not compulsory. The answer to the last paragraph is in the negative.

BOER ASSAULT ON NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENT.

MR. DUNCOMBE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the correspondent of the "Times" newspaper has been assaulted by Boers at Johannesburg because he has sent truthful accounts of the grievances of the Uitlanders to this country; and whether the Government propose to take any action in the matter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: The editor of the Johannesburg "Star" appears to have been assaulted on account of an article in that paper on the subject of the International Peace Conference. His assailant, who was a private individual, has been fined £20, and, as at present advised, I do not propose to take any action in the matter.

FINLAND CONSTITUTION.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Tsar has recently abrogated the free constitution of Finland in order to largely increase the Finnish quota of the Russian army?

MR. BRODRICK: A manifesto was issued by the Emperor of Russia in February last reserving for his decision the final specification of legislative questions common to the whole empire while leaving in force the existing rules for the publication in Finland of laws of local interest. I can express no opinion as to the object of the manifesto.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Is the right honourable Gentleman aware that it is proposed to increase the Finnish quota to the Russian army by 500 per cent.?

[No Reply.]

NATIONAL DEBT.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the present First Lord of the Admiralty, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated, on 21st April

1887, that he had made a calculation that if the fixed charge of £26,000,000 per year for the National Debt as then proposed were steadily persevered with, we should redeem £600,000,000 at par in about 52 years, and £700,000,000 in 56 years, so that by the year 1943 the whole of the then present National Debt would be extinguished; and whether he has now made any similar calculation to show the effect which will be attained in this respect if the fixed charge as now proposed of £23,000,000 per year be persevered with, and to show at what date under this diminished charge the present National Debt would be extinguished?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The high premium at which Consols now stand and the increased uncertainty as to their value in the future would make any such calculation as that to which the honourable Member refers so purely hypothetical at the present time as to be valueless. I believe that if matters remained as at present a fixed Debt charge of £23,000,000 a year would discharge the Debt in about 60 years—a term which Parliament has sanctioned in the case of municipalities. But I attach no importance to hypothetical calculations.

ANCIENT IRISH ORNAMENTS.

MR. W. REDMOND: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Committee appointed to inquire into the disposal of the ancient ornaments has reported yet?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I propose to present the Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the disposal of the ancient Irish ornaments to-day.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will undertake to give time for a discussion on the Resolution relative to University education in Ireland which stands on the Notice Paper?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: No, Sir; I can make no promise.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: May I ask the right honourable Gentleman whether he intends to take any steps this Session to give practical effect to the views that he has so frequently expressed in his public speeches upon this Question?

MR. DILLON: May I supplement the Question by asking the right honourable Gentleman whether he has taken into consideration the fact that it is only by giving time for the discussion of this Resolution that the opinion of the House upon this Question can be taken this Session?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: That, of course, is a self-evident proposition. With regard to the Question I do not think it is a matter that can be dealt with by question and answer across the floor of the House.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: Is the right honourable Gentleman aware that opinion in Ireland, with the exception of that of a small number of Orangemen in Ulster—

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MUNICIPAL TRADING.

SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when he proposes to appoint the Committee on Municipal Trading?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Negotiations for the appointment of the Committee on Municipal Trading are in progress; but I cannot mention any precise date on which it will be appointed.

IRISH BUSINESS.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can make a general statement as to the time when Irish Business will be taken, and also further information as regards the Charitable Loans Bill, the Tithe Rent-Charge Bill, and the Bill for the establishment of a Board of Agriculture in

Ireland, and the date upon which any of them will be introduced?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: One of the Bills has already been introduced.

MR. DILLON: Yes, but we do not know with regard to the Second Reading.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I do not propose to take the Second Reading of any of these Bills before Whitsuntide. As regards Irish Supply, I do not intend to take it before Whitsuntide either, unless the honourable Gentleman and others sitting in that part of the House express the wish that it should be taken. I rather imagine that it would be more convenient to the Irish Members that it should be taken after Whitsuntide.

MR. DILLON: Can the right honourable Gentleman give us some assurance that Irish business will be taken together at some part of the Session, or that these Bills will not be proceeded with at any stage before Whitsuntide? It would be inconvenient to Irish Members—it would be perfectly unfair to Irish Members—that they should not know when Irish business is to be taken.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The honourable Gentleman will see that I have already given him a negative answer with regard to the whole time between this and Whitsuntide.

MR. DILLON: As to the First Reading.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: As to the First Reading. If any Bill is introduced it will be, of course, under the Ten Minutes' Rule, and any long discussion would, under those circumstances, be impossible.

MR. DILLON: That is what we object to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfar): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what business he proposes to take next week?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I propose to take the Second Reading of the Finance Bill on Monday next. Any remaining Government time

will be devoted to the London Government Bill.

MR. D. A. THOMAS: Does the Government propose to give Members an opportunity for discussing the questions raised under the Railway Regulation Bill, especially having regard to the fact that Members have given up a former opportunity on the understanding that the Bill will be referred to a Select Committee?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: We cannot proceed with the Couplings Bill next week.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith), CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, in the Chair.]

(In the Committee.)

CLAUSE 1.

Question again proposed—

"That clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) disclaimed any intention to continue the discussion at any length upon this clause. There was only one remark he desired to make upon it. The Committee felt that, with regard to the various matters in Schedule 1 of the Bill, the position had been greatly improved, but he trusted there would be another opportunity for discussing that. With regard to the other areas which did not appear in Schedule 1, but which were to be dealt with in Schedule B, there was one question he desired to put. There were very wide powers in the Bill, and the question he desired to put was whether some further opportunity would be given to the Committee to consider what might be done with regard to the areas which might be dealt with under Schedule B. It did not appear whether there would be any opportunity of revising them. It

was a point on which he believed great interest was felt out-of-doors as well as in the House, and he thought some assurance should be given, and, if it were, it would greatly facilitate the passing of the clause.

MR. HALDANE (Haddingtonshire) desired, before the Question was answered, to put it in a more precise form. There was power under the clause to the Queen in Council to fix the boundaries of the new boroughs by Order in Council. He was not satisfied that in clauses 14 and 15 of the Bill there was any machinery for bringing those orders before Parliament. It was a matter of importance, and it was only right that the right honourable Gentleman should provide some machinery for that purpose. The matter would be greatly facilitated, he thought, if some assurance was given with regard to the Orders that they should be laid upon the Table of the House, so that they might be discussed in the same way as was afforded by the Educational Endowment Act. Unless that was done this matter would be taken out of the consideration of the House.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I am not quite certain that the same Question is the same as the second put by the honourable and learned Gentleman who has just sat down. I understand the honourable Member for Islington desires to know whether there will be an opportunity for discussing this matter after the Commission has been appointed. I answer distinctly in the affirmative.

MR. LOUGH: I accept the question of my honourable and learned Friend, and associate myself with the question put by him.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The honourable Gentleman will have the opportunity he desires on the consideration of clauses 14 and 15. I fail to see the reason for the House to discuss the question of boundaries, which it is not able to decide, nor is it the practice of the Privy Council, when settling the boundaries of municipalities under their charter, to bring before the House questions of boundaries. I do not think that this is the proper time

to discuss the questions raised by the honourable Member; the proper place to consider them is at a later stage of the discussion.

MR. BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said he quite understood that the right honourable Gentleman did not wish to give a hasty reply at the moment upon the question. He desired to make a few observations upon the clause generally. He did not wish to be thought to acquiesce in it in its amended form, though it was no doubt a great improvement upon the clause as originally introduced. He recognised the conciliatory attitude of the right honourable Gentleman in dealing with it, but the clause still contained a blot in the shape of the misleading word "municipality" instead of "district," and it took out of the hands of Parliament any power to interfere with it. It did not give definite instructions either to the Boundary Commissioners. He desired to emphasise what were the alterations in the clause, in order that no misunderstanding might arise hereafter. He understood that the right honourable Gentleman had given a promise that when he came to the schedule he would favourably consider any area which it was proposed to bring into the schedule.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The honourable Gentleman assumes that I have given a pledge. I said I would consider any suggestion brought before me on the schedule that other areas should be added. As the phrase "favourable consideration" is often interpreted in the House, it would pledge me to accept any Amendment which might be submitted, and I could not make any such pledge.

MR. BUXTON said his object in making these observations was that there should be no misunderstanding. He quite understood the right honourable Gentleman's qualification, and withdrew the word "promise." He understood the right honourable Gentleman to say he would not absolutely pledge himself upon the schedule as it stood, and that if any area not included in the schedule was brought forward he would consider arguments with regard to it. No doubt the instructions to the Committee which had been introduced into the clause would be of great value to the Bill, because the Commissioners were not at present left

entirely alone, and they were to have regard to the districts themselves, which was a very valuable instruction to them. The further Amendment of the right honourable Gentleman himself, when he altered the words of the clause with relation to the rateable value and population—rateable value except in the case of small boroughs of under 100,000—would now disappear under the alteration, and the Commissioners would see that it was not the intention of the House that there should be large rateable values, and, consequently, they would have a wider discretion in the creation of smaller municipalities. There was a great improvement in the clause, but it still left much to be desired. The maximum was still put at 400,000, and is still left megalomaniacal ideas room to expand. He thought the right honourable Gentleman ought to inform the Committee what were the Government's real intentions with regard to the matter. It was not fair that there should be no information as to what the Government desired in regard to the unscheduled areas. He hoped the Committee would be informed whether it was the desire of the right honourable Gentleman that there should be these great municipalities in the East of London, or whether there should be small municipalities.

MR. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said, although the clause was one with which he disagreed, it was one to which great attention had been given. He did not rise for the purpose of discussing it, but for the purpose of emphasising the position of the clause when the Bill passed. If the clause passed and the rest of the Bill remained unaltered the House would have no power to superintend or deal with the boundaries of the new areas except when the Commissioners went beyond their instructions under clause B. It would be done by an Order in Council, which was very much the same in character as a Royal Charter in the case of old boroughs. The question of the boundaries was a very important one, and one in which he thought the House had a real interest, and he believed that there would be very little difficulty in arriving at some arrangement by which the question of settling them might be brought before the House. He desired to be informed as to whether

such an arrangement would be come to. There was an alternative method of dealing with the question, which was, that the right honourable Gentleman should make some definite statement as to the intentions of the Government with regard to the size of the new boroughs. If the House had a clearer perception as to what size the boroughs under clause B were to be it would greatly facilitate the discussion. He did not consider his request unreasonable, but he did not press it immediately, but would ask the right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to give the information in the course of the Debate. He thought that the House was entitled to some official information as to the size of some of the unscheduled areas. Important discussions would arise as to whether a borough ought to be separated from its neighbour, or ought to be joined, and questions would arise as to the amount of rates, and as to the debt (whether represented by assets or not) of these unscheduled areas.

The clause, as amended, was added to the Bill.

CLAUSE 2.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 27, to leave out the word 'alderman.'—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.), in moving the omission of "aldermen," contended that it did not form part of the constitution of the new boroughs. He rested his case on two grounds. In the first place, he objected to aldermen altogether; and, in the second place, there were special reasons why aldermen should not form part of the constitution of the new boroughs. The institution of aldermen was for the supposed purpose of securing the services of men of greater knowledge, weight, and experience, who would not offer themselves to a constituency. His answer to that was that there was nothing which could compensate for the absence of direct contact with the constituency, and no argument had been used in favour of "aldermen" which was not applicable to the other side of the question. If there were persons so fragile and delicate that they could not bear the brunt of a popular election, he thought that they might dispense with their services. The real

fact was, that aldermen would be taken from a class of men who had neither the time nor inclination to attend to the business for which they had been co-opted in these councils, and that was shown by the experience of the London County Council. There were hard-working aldermen on the London County Council, but as a member of that body of some years' standing he (*Mr. Pickersgill*) had come to the conclusion that the labours and distasteful work of the committees was not discharged by them to the same extent that it was by the elected members. It had been said that the position of aldermen was an attractive one, and that by retaining that position they were able to secure the services of men who had a greater knowledge of local government, whom they would not otherwise secure. That might be so, but how long would the position continue to be attractive after the Measure now before the House had become law if his Amendment was lost? He did not exaggerate when he said that this Bill would bring 500 aldermen into creation, and the largeness of the number would not only make the institution ridiculous, but accelerate its extinction. The probable effect of including aldermen in the new counties would be that the best men would lay by, instead of coming forward as candidates for election, in the hope that they would be co-opted as aldermen, and the legislative council would be inferior in its character to what it would be under a different system. The people of London as a whole did not like a number of indirect elections. Their experience of indirect elections had not been fortunate. They still remembered the Metropolitan Board of Works, and when that indirectly-elected body was proposed to be established precisely the same argument in favour of that peculiar mode of constitution was advanced then as now.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The honourable Gentleman seems to a certain extent to have forgotten the example set by the municipal corporations throughout the country. There is no movement of any force or volume that I know of to get rid of the institution of aldermen in county boroughs, or, indeed, in any municipal borough outside the limits of London. Criticism has, indeed, been passed upon

Mr. Stuart.

them, chiefly owing to the fact that in certain cases their presence has unduly prolonged the preponderance of a particular Party in the Council; still, I think the general experience of those interested in local government is that the institution has, on the whole, worked successfully, rather than the reverse. And, Sir, legislation in this House which has dealt so much with local government during the last 10 or 15 years is in favour of the course the Government now proposes to pursue. We deliberately instituted aldermen in the case of the London County Council, and we deliberately instituted aldermen in the case of Councils in the rest of the country.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Not in Ireland.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: We have not done so in Ireland for many reasons, which I will not go into now. There may be here and there cases in which borough councils will elect as aldermen persons who have never been popularly elected to serve as councillors, but the experience of county boroughs, which is the nearest analogy to the present case, indicates, speaking broadly, that the aldermen will be chosen from among the number of councillors. I think we may take it that human nature is very much the same in London as it is in Manchester, Liverpool, or Birmingham, and that it is extremely unlikely that any large number of aldermen will be elected, except among the councillors themselves. Under these circumstances, I think the danger which the honourable Member points out is an illusory danger. On the other hand there are many persons upon these councils, whose services are perfectly invaluable to the locality, who are perfectly prepared to go through the trouble of one, two, or three popular elections, but are not prepared indefinitely to undergo that labour in addition to the work of administering their district. Well, Sir, I have great sympathy with those persons. I think those persons' services are of extreme value to the community, and I should be very sorry if we were to deprive ourselves of those services by rejecting, on rather shadowy grounds, an institution which has been proved to be of great practical utility in relation to the administration of local affairs.

MR. HALDANE: In the case of district councils, the most recent analogy, Parliament deliberately went away from the principle of co-optic aldermen. It seemed to him, moreover, that the argument of the right honourable Gentleman did not apply at all satisfactorily to the bodies which the right honourable Gentleman proposed to constitute by his Bill. In the case of the London County Council it was no doubt right that it should be left open to the Council to co-opt those whom it had co-opted to take a more or less prominent part in the administration of the affairs of the Council. They had the whole of London to choose from; and he should regard the concessions of some value if the right honourable Gentleman had allowed Whitechapel or Bethnal Green to co-opt somebody of financial experience who would be willing to undertake the missionary enterprise of going to the East End and there bestowing the benefit of his experience and knowledge upon the body to which he was co-opted. But the provisions of the Bill restricted the qualifications of aldermen to that of a borough councillor, and therefore it was impossible to get that kind of assistance which could be got from London as a whole. The East End boroughs would have to be co-opted from men who had not had the opportunities which had been enjoyed by the sort of class who had been co-opted in the County Council. In the interests of the East End constituencies rather than the West End, he should vote for the Amendment.

MR. LOWLES (Shoreditch) appealed to the right honourable Gentleman to reconsider his decision. Of seven Amendments in identical terms to that before the Committee, three came from the Ministerial side of the House, and, singularly enough, one stood in the name of his honourable Friend who shared with him the representation of Shoreditch. These might be taken to reflect the feeling of those who were in daily contact with their constituents in the East End. It would be especially difficult in that part of London, for a variety of reasons, to co-opt men of the character of the aldermen on the County Council. There was no analogy between aldermen in county boroughs and aldermen in London boroughs. He strongly felt that

the non-representative character of these aldermen, who as the Bill stood would form a ridiculously large proportion of the whole council, was in itself an objection to the inclusion of the aldermen in the Bill. What they all desired was not to perpetuate anomalies but to secure the better administration of local government. He believed that the only way to secure it was to make every person directly responsible to the electorate; and if, therefore, the Government insisted on the inclusion of aldermen he should have to go, in the Division, into the other lobby.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said the honourable Member for Bethnal Green quoted quite accurately the Report of the Royal Commission over which he had the honour to preside, but he admitted that for his own part he had a perfectly open mind on this subject. The whole question was whether aldermen were likely to be efficient and worthy members of the body to which they were co-opted, and on that point the experience of the country showed that they had been very useful members. With respect to the London County Council, he believed the experience there was that it had been strengthened by the admission of aldermen selected from without, and he understood that they formed a very useful element. His vote on the subject would be influenced very much by what his right honourable Friend the Leader of the House might say on the subject of how these aldermen would be brought into the councils in these districts. He could not conceive why the Committee should object to the extension of the choice of aldermen beyond that to which it was apparently now restricted. Under the Bill as it now stood he was inclined to think that women were eligible as aldermen or "alderwomen," and if women were brought in there would be the possibility of a valuable addition to those bodies. If they could introduce in the election of aldermen some provision which would make them correspond to the different divisions of the Council which co-opted them, so that there should be no machinery for increasing or perpetuating the strength of one party, he thought the argument in favour of aldermen would be greatly strengthened. He should certainly be disposed to support

Mr. Lowles.

the Bill as it now stood, if the First Lord of the Treasury would give an assurance on one or more of three points, namely, (1) that aldermen should be eligible as aldermen, even if they had not the qualification necessary for being elected as councillors in the particular district for which they were willing to be chosen as aldermen; (2) that women should be eligible to be co-opted, as well as men as aldermen, and (3) that there should be some provision to secure in the choice of aldermen a representation proportionate in weight and numbers to the different sections of opinion among the elected councillors.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: My right honourable Friend behind me and the honourable and learned Member for Haddingtonshire on the other side have made an appeal to me, and perhaps it will conduce to an agreement on this subject if I were to say that there appears to me to be a very strong case for a wider qualification as regards both aldermen and councillors, and I shall certainly be prepared either to accept some of the Amendments on the Paper or to propose words myself carrying out that idea.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.) said the Member for Fife (Mr. Birrell) had declared that he could find no poet, from Shakespeare to Kipling, who had sung the praises of aldermen. Poetry was usually associated with the tender passion, whereas aldermen were more associated with unusual abdominal development and turtle soup. He (Captain Norton) had consulted the encyclopædia and he found nothing with reference to aldermen, except the fact that in Anglo-Saxon times they were persons of great importance, second only to the king, and acting sometimes as viceroys. But how had they fallen from their high estate. In attempting to give the suggested dignity to these new bodies, they would be clashing with the genuine aldermen of the City of London. The genuine alderman of the City of London was an individual of importance. He represented a great historical centre, isolated though it was from the remainder of London. Again, the new aldermen would be brought into contact with the aldermen of the London County Council, who, in their turn, represented

the *élite*, in some sense, of the citizens of London and a population of 4,000,000. Moreover, they were going to bring them in by a back-door, and if they did this it would bring about, in many instances, a continuity of bad policy. They had in London, in these new borough areas, a migratory population, and the men who might be selected as aldermen might be in another part of London before the next election came round. What an absurdity the creation of such a large number of aldermen to the degradation of the aldermen of the City and the aldermen of the London County Council! It would further lead to a distinction being drawn between aldermen and aldermen. They would have the unfortunate aldermen of the East End boroughs, since their position would not enable them to indulge in real turtle soup, known as mock turtle aldermen or as calf's head aldermen, and the result would be to degrade in the eyes of the English people the honoured title of alderman.

MR. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.) said that in his evidence before the Commission of 1894 he was opposed to aldermen for the new corporations which it was thought might then be established. Experience, however, had shown that his judgment in that matter was probably wrong. At the time when he spoke the elections to the vestries were not held, as the elections to the corporations would be, triennially. He did think it was most important that aldermen should be elected for a term, in order that the whole body might not disappear simultaneously. Experience in the London County Council had shown that aldermen who were left in at the time of elections gave great assistance when the new body came into operation. He must confess he was a little surprised at the language used by the honourable Member for Bethnal Green when he spoke of the "select private door" which it was proposed to open to allow those aldermen to come in; and the honourable Member who had just sat down spoke of it as a "back door." He would like to know what the London County Council would have been at this minute without that back door by which several gentlemen who had been defeated at the polls were brought into the Council, and several of them very worthily held seats. Among these

were Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Hoare, the well-known banker, and last, but not least, a gentleman whom everybody knew, Sir Algernon West. The honourable Member for Bethnal Green had spoken as if the aldermen were merely ornamental, and did not do much work; but that was not his experience. They did a fair share of the work, and at this moment Lord Welby was acting as Chairman, an office which was no mere sinecure, and certainly not a bed of roses. He hoped the Leader of the House would accept in some form the Amendment of the honourable Member for Chelsea, which would carry out the proposal of the honourable Member for Haddington, that the boroughs could be able to go out of their own area and bring in aldermen from the outside. If that were done the whole objection to aldermen would pass away.

MR. STUART rose to disabuse the mind of the right honourable Gentleman the Leader of the House that what he had suggested, namely, that the aldermen should have no qualification in the boroughs, met with the general approval of Members on that side of the House. He believed that that would make matters worse and not better. The whole theory of the local government which the right honourable Gentleman was constructing was that the ratepayers should elect persons who were responsible to them, and who would have certain qualifications which would make them feel that where they spent the rates badly they would feel it in their own persons. That view extended throughout all the municipal government of England. They wanted to encourage local life in these districts, but if these small honours were to be given to those outside the districts, where was the argument for the intensification of local life? What they would encourage would be a species of dilettante aldermen from the West End, who would come down to the East to indulge in a species of philanthropy. He was entirely opposed to aldermen. Nobody had ever asked for them; no local body that he knew of had asked for them. On the contrary, he had seen a letter addressed by the Secretary of the London Municipal Society to a lady who had asked whether the society would support women being made aldermen. The

answer was that they supported women being in the councils, but that they did not expect aldermen would be in the Bill at all. The Conference at Westminster did not suggest it. The Bill which was drawn up under the auspices of that Conference did not suggest it. Where, then, did the suggestion come from? They were altogether at a loss as to why London should be gifted with 400 or 500 aldermen, who had never been asked for.

***SIR M. M. BHOWNAGGREE** (Bethnal Green, N.E.) said that in putting down the Amendment which stood in his name he had only tried to give expression to the feeling which existed in his constituency as to aldermen. The main reason which influenced many honourable Members as well as the public generally in their opposition to the adoption of the aldermanic principle was that persons who did not command popular approval, or who could not make their way into the borough councils by popular election, might get in by a side door. He must say that the concession of the right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury did not meet the case. If they restricted the election of aldermen from among those who were elected as councillors, then the fears which underlay their objection to the clause as it stood would be removed. The concession that had been made was practically valueless, and if the First Lord of the Treasury did not make a further concession in the direction he had indicated he would go into the Lobby against the clause.

***LORD E. FITZMAURICE** (Wilts, Cricklade) said that the high authority of the memory of Lord Melbourne's and Lord Russell's Government at the time of the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act had been quoted in favour of the appointment of aldermen. It should be remembered that when the Municipal Corporations Bill was sent up to the House of Lords there were no aldermen in it. They were inserted by the House of Lords, and Lord Melbourne and Lord Russell's Government accepted that Amendment very unwillingly. He wished to suggest to the Committee that there was an answer to the argument from experience of the county councils and municipal boroughs, and that was that the powers given by this Bill to the

metropolitan boroughs were exceedingly small as compared to those given to the county councils and municipal boroughs. So far as he could make out, the new boroughs would have nothing whatever to do except to look after the streets in their districts, and some minor matters of sanitation. They would have nothing to do with main drainage, with tramways, with electric lighting, or with the large and most important class of business which municipal boroughs had to do with. Surely it was not necessary to bring in aldermen from the outside to discharge such duties as were conferred on the new boroughs. As to the argument of continuity, that might be obtained by giving the elective councillors a longer term of office, and doing away with the objectionable clause in the Bill by which a certain number were to go out of office every year. In 1888 the President of the Board of Trade hesitated a long time as to whether he would insert aldermen in the London County Council Bill or give the councillors a longer period of office. He always regretted that the President of the Board of Trade did not take the second alternative, and he suggested to the Government whether it would not be better to drop aldermen altogether and give to the councillors a longer period of office.

COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) said that the honourable Member who had just sat down had stated that the new boroughs would have nothing to do with electric lighting. That was not so. The present local authorities in different parts of London were getting Provisional Orders to carry out electric lighting in their districts, and the feeling was spreading every day that the local authorities should furnish the electric lighting rather than companies. He could assure the Committee that there would be plenty of work on which these boroughs could exercise their best intelligence. The new boroughs were, as far as possible, to have equal powers with those of the municipal boroughs in other parts of England. He could hardly imagine a mayor without aldermen; they might just as well have a bride without bridesmaids.

MR. STEADMAN (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) said the purpose of the Government in putting aldermen into the Bill was, it was alleged, to get the very best

Mr. Stuart.

men possible to take an active part in municipal life and work. But he thought that the Government would have attained that object without having aldermen upon the new borough councils. He knew that at the present time it was impossible to get good local men to contest vestry elections. In the first place they detested the word "vestry," and the very fact of altering the name of vestry to borough council would induce better men to come out without having aldermen on the councils. The fact also that the chairman of the borough council would be a mayor would induce the very best men in the East End of London to come out and contest an election. His chief reason for objecting to aldermen was this: At the present time Members of Parliament had to go through a very severely-contested election, and the same applied to the members of the London County Council. They all knew by experience that a contested election meant worry, anxiety, sleepless nights, and considerable expense; but if aldermen were to be retained in the Bill, the first duty of those who had undergone all the worry, anxiety, and expense of a contested election would be to elect a number of aldermen who had taken no part in the worry, anxiety, and sleepless nights, nor even in the expense, and these aldermen would come in and take a position which was supposed to be more dignified than that of the councillors. He was inclined to say that if gentlemen aspired to dignity they ought to take some share in the responsibility in securing that dignity, and if any men were entitled to dignity they were those who had gone through an election contest. They had been told that the London County Council was greatly indebted to certain of the aldermen on that Council, although these men had been defeated at the polls. That might be true. As for their taking a fair share of the work, they might attend on the Tuesdays, but the municipal work of London was not done at the general meetings on Tuesdays, but in the committee-room; and if the attendances of the aldermen, as compared with those of the councillors elected under responsibility to their constituents, were analysed, it would be found that the aldermen were very low down in the scale as far as real work was concerned. He

thought the honourable Member for Chelsea could tell the House what work he had himself seen in the committee-room as an alderman. It had been said that it would have been a great loss if certain gentlemen like Mr. Dickinson, who were defeated at the polls, had not been chosen for the Council. But it did not follow that if these gentlemen were defeated at the polls at one election London would have lost their services unless they had been chosen as aldermen. At the last General Election two leaders of the Liberal Party were defeated at the polls, but constituencies were found for them, and they were still Members of the House. The same thing would apply to men like Mr. Dickinson. No doubt, rather than lose the services of such an able man, another constituency would have been found for him in another part of London. The First Lord of the Treasury had stated that no movement had been made to get rid of the aldermen. That was quite true, but it did not follow that a principle which was good many years ago was good for to-day. Why, even Conservatives had turned Liberals, and Liberals Radicals. Now was the time and the opportunity when defects in the legislation of the past could be remedied. He did not suppose for one moment that even Her Majesty's Government would have inserted aldermen in the London County Council Bill had they foreseen the result of the recent elections to the London County Council. If Her Majesty's Government were to speak the truth, he believed they very much regretted inserting aldermen in that Bill. There were no aldermen in the Local Government for Ireland Act, and he maintained that legislation which was good for Ireland was good for London, and that London was not entitled to any more privileges than Ireland. In conclusion, he had no objection to any man being on the borough councils provided he was duly elected by a constituency. He might be a Member of the House of Lords or any other House, so long as he was elected by and represented the people. Then he would have to bear the responsibility, and account to the people for his work. At the present day in the London County Council an alderman, although bearing a title higher than that of councillor, could please himself

as to what work he would do, and could stay away from the Council, for he was responsible to no one. He believed in everyone being responsible to his constituents. Because of that consideration, he trusted that the First Lord of the Treasury would delete aldermen from the Bill.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said he had no objection to the creation of aldermen on the new councils with the reservation, which he thought was a wise one, that they should be selected from amongst the councillors returned by the electors. He could not help thinking that the proposal of the First Lord of the Treasury to allow aldermen to be appointed from outside the area would not work well in London. If they were elected from the councillors they would possess local knowledge, and would be trusted by the electors. The title was an honourable one, and it came down to them from Anglo-Saxon times. No doubt 500 appeared a large number of aldermen, but compared with the vast population of London, he did not think it was larger than the number of aldermen in Manchester, as compared with the population of that city.

*MR. J. SAMUEL (Stockton) expressed his surprise at the alacrity with which the right honourable Gentleman the Leader of the House had accepted the suggestion in reference to co-opted aldermen, which he thought was a dangerous and undemocratic principle. The aldermen in some of our municipal boroughs were very unpopular because they did not represent the ratepayers directly, and some of those boroughs had already adopted resolutions in favour of the abolition of aldermen. If the Committee adopted this suggestion, men who lived in the West End could become aldermen for Whitechapel and other places in the East End, where the council would become very unpopular in consequence. There was no comparison between the co-opted members of these boroughs and the County Council, because in the latter case they were all residents within the county of London, and were liable to the county rate. He did not think men should be elected to serve as aldermen and become responsible for the expenditure of money towards which they would not pay a single fraction. In the municipal

boroughs, at the present time, those elected as aldermen must be councillors or qualified to elect to the office of councillor. He protested against this suggestion being adopted, and he was more than surprised that it should have been made from the Liberal side of the House, because of its anti-democratic spirit. Although he was an alderman himself, he was opposed to the creation of any new aldermen by fresh legislation, and if they were to have aldermen they should be resident within the district, and be qualified to be elected as councillors. The idea of co-opted aldermen was against the spirit of the age, and, therefore, he hoped the Government would reconsider their position before adopting the suggestion that had been made.

*MR. H. H. MARKS (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) said the honourable Member for Stepney had pointed out that the disadvantages which existed in the present system were due to the indisposition of the better class of men to take part in local affairs owing to the bad repute which attached to vestries, and he went on to say that this indisposition would disappear when the vestry gave place to the borough. He thought that argument was a very high and just commendation of the Bill before the House. The honourable Member went on to say that the better class of men who were not willing to take part in vestry work would be found quite ready to take part in borough work, because those who were not ambitious of serving in the office of chairman of the vestry would be anxious to serve in the office of mayor. The mayor would be selected from the aldermen, and if the best men were anxious to serve as mayor, they would also be anxious to serve as aldermen. Under those circumstances, what became of the suggestion that it would be difficult to get aldermen of the right class? He should support the retention of aldermen, but he objected to selecting them from outside the district. Such a proposal would create a class of carpet-bag aldermen, migratory aldermen, going from one part of London to the other in order to give preponderance to either one Party or the other. It had been said that aldermen were not responsible to the people, but if they were chosen from the representative

men of the constituency, although they might not be directly responsible, the fact that they were elected from their own district would be a check and a restraint upon them in the performance of their public duties. They would, at least, be answerable to and dependent upon the opinion of the people among whom they live. But what became of that restraint if the aldermen came from a distance to serve in a district where they were not known, and where they had nothing in common with the residents of the borough upon whose council they served?

MR. BURNS (Battersea) admitted that he shared some of the views of the honourable Member who had last spoken as to the disadvantage of having peripatetic aldermen, but he was going to vote against all aldermen, lock, stock, and barrel, from either the north, south, east, or west. The Member for St. George's-in-the-East said this Bill would attract a better type of men than could now be secured. This Measure would reduce the number from 120 to 70, and if they brought in the co-opted person and the peripatetic aldermen from outside, they would find the humbler, industrious men who possessed local knowledge and took an active interest in the work, would be out-voted by vagrom aldermen from the West End. The local life of a district was not the kind of work which the aldermen of their provincial boroughs indulged in. The type of aldermen whom they had elected were men who had lived in the district and who had served for a long time as councillors, and consequently they possessed a minute knowledge of the local affairs of their district. The conditions of local life in London did not tend to the production of the same type of aldermen, because it was possible for a man to know nothing of Mile End, and yet know a good deal about drainage, markets, electric lighting, and other matters with which provincial councils had to deal. What they had to recognise was, that if local life was to be stimulated, it could only be done by attracting the best men in the locality themselves. If the peripatetic aldermen were encouraged he knew what it meant, for they would be used by the electric lighting companies to get Provisional Orders through. Those young

gentlemen of light and leading from the West End would not be understood in local life, but would be used by large metropolitan vested interests in pulling the councillors the wrong way, and their service would not be based upon local knowledge, but upon metropolitan interests perhaps of a suspicious character, which the local authority ought to have nothing whatever to do with. He thought this proposal was detrimentally opposed to the interests of local life, and was not for its improvement in any shape whatsoever.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.) reminded the Committee that the East End of London had elected quite a number of distinguished men as County Councillors who came from other parts of London, and he did not know what fault the honourable Member for Battersea had to find with the votes of those gentlemen. He thought that was conclusive evidence that the people of the East End, far from resenting the inclusion of persons outside their division, were only too grateful when they could get persons of great influence and education to concern themselves in the administration of the local affairs of the East End of London.

MR. BURNS pointed out that the distinguished gentlemen mentioned had been through the ordeal of a popular election.

MR. COHEN said they were nevertheless people outside the division. He denied altogether the charge that the aldermen of the London County Council had neglected their duties on the committees of that body, and the honourable Member for Stepney was singularly unfortunate in the illustration he had chosen. Some of the best members and some of the most industrious men on the Council had been aldermen, and he was quite sure that if his right honourable Friend accepted the Amendment to be moved by the Member for Chelsea, which, while enabling aldermen to be members of the borough council, no matter where they resided, it would be conferring a very great boon, of which the council would take advantage.

MR. BILLSON (Halifax) said the whole object of the Bill was that local wants should be properly looked after. Therefore it seemed most natural and proper not only that every councillor should be required to have a qualification in the

constituency, and that every alderman should not only have a similar qualification, but should also previously have been a member of the council itself. At a later stage he should propose that this be provided for in the Bill.

Question put—

"That the word 'aldermen' stand part of the clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 245; Noes 140.—(Division List, No. 103.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
Aird, John
Allhusen, Augustus H. E.
Allsopp, Hon. George
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. J. FitzRoy
Baird, John G. Alexander
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
Banbury, Frederick Geo.
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Barry, Rt. Hn. A. H. Smith (Hunts)
Bartley, George C. T.
Barton, Dunbar Plunket
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Beach, W. W. B. (Hants.)
Begg, Ferdinand Faithfull
Bemrose, Sir Henry Howe
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Beresford, Lord Charles
Biddulph, Michael
Bill, Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bolitho, Thomas Bedford
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, A. Griffith-
Boulnois, Edmund
Bousfield, William Robert
Bowles, T. G. (King's Lynn)
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, John George
Carlile, Wm. Walter
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
Cayzer, Sir Chas. Wm.
Cecil, E. (Hertford, E.)
Cecil, Lord H. (Greenwich)
Chaloner, Capt. R. G. W.
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm)
Chamberlain, J. A. (Worc'r)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Charrington, Spencer
Chelsea, Viscount
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Clarke, Sir E. (Plymouth)
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Cooke, C. W. R. (Hereford)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Cornwallis, Fiennes S. W.
Cotton-Jodrell, Col. E. T. D.
Courtney, Rt. Hon. L. H.
Cranborne, Viscount
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cruddas, William Donaldson
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Curran, T. B. (Donegal)

Curzon, Viscount
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Dickson-Poynder, Sir J. P.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Donkin, Richard Sim
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers
Doxford, W. Theodore
Duncombe, Hon. H. V.
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Egerton, Hn. A. de Tatton
Elliot, Hon. A. R. Douglas
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn E.
Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manc'r)
Finch, George H.
Finlay, Sir R. Bannatyne
Firbank, Joseph Thomas
Fisher, William Hayes
Fison, Fredk. Wm.
FitzGerald, Sir R. Penrose-
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Fletcher, Sir Henry
Folkestone, Viscount
Forster, Henry Wm.
Fry, Lewis
Garfit, William
Gedge, Sydney
Gibbons, J. Lloyd
Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H. (C. of Lond.)
Gibbs, Hon. V. (St. Albans)
Giles, Charles Tyrrell
Gilliat, John Saunders
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Goldsworthy, Major-General
Gordon, Hon. J. Edward
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. Geo.'s)
Goulding, Edw. Alfred
Graham, Henry Robert
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
Green, W. D. (Wednesbury)
Gretton, John
Gull, Sir Cameron
Gunter, Colonel
Halsey, Thos. Fredk.
Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord Geo
Hanson, Sir Reginald
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Heath, James
Henderson, Alexander
Hermion-Hodge, Robt. Trotter
Hickman, Sir Alfred
Hill, Sir E. Stock (Bristol)
Hoare, E. Brodie (Hampstead)
Hobhouse, Henry
Holland, Hon. L. R. (Bow)
Houston, R. P.
Howell, William Tudor
Howorth, Sir H. Hoyle
Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
Hughes, Col. Edwin

Hutton, John (Yorks, N.R.)
Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
Johnston, William (Belfast)
Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
Kemp, George
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. Wm.
Kimber, Henry
Knowles, Lees
Lafone, Alfred
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Lawrence, Sir E. D. (Cornwall)
Lawrence, W. F. (Liverpool)
Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
Lea, Sir T. (Londonderry)
Llewellyn, E. H. (Somerset)
Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald W. Erskine
Long, Rt. Hon. W. (Liverpool)
Lopes, Henry Y. Buller
Lorne, Marquess of
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Lubbock, Rt. Hon. Sir J.
Lucas-Shadwell, William
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Macartney, W. G. Ellison
Macdonald, John Cumming
Maclure, Sir J. William
McArthur, C. (Liverpool)
McIver, Sir L. (Edinburgh, W)
McKillop, James
Marks, Harry H.
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
Milward, Colonel Victor
Monckton, Edward Philip
Monk, Charles James
Moore, Wm. (Antrim, N.)
More, R. J. (Shropshire)
Morgan, Hn. F. (Monm'thsh.)
Morton, A. H. A. (Deptford)
Murray, Rt. Hn. A. G. (Bute)
Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
Myers, William Henry
Newdigate, Francis Alexander
Nicholson, William Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Northcote, Hon. Sir H. Stafford
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, H. Pike (Darlington)
Penn, John
Percy, Earl
Phillipotts, Captain Arthur
Pierpoint, Robert
Platt-Higgins, Fredk.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretymann, Ernest George

Mr. Billson.

Priestley, Sir W. O. (Edin.)
 Pryce-Jones, Lt. Col. Edward
 Purvis, Robert
 Pym, C. Guy
 Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
 Renshaw, Charles Bine
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
 Round, James
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Cheltenham)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Ryder, J. Herbert Dudley
 Samuel, H. S. (Limehouse)
 Sandys, Lieut.-Col. T. Myles
 Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
 Savory, Sir Joseph
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, Wm. Edw. T.
 Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renfrew)

Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, J. P. (Lanarks)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Spencer, Ernest
 Stanley, Edw. J. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stephens, Henry Charles
 Stewart, Sir M. J. M. Taggart
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir J. M.
 Stone, Sir Benjamin
 Strutt, Hon. Chas. Hedley
 Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
 Thorburn, Walter
 Tomlinson, W. E. Murray
 Tritton, Charles Ernest
 Valentia, Viscount
 Ward, Hon. Robt. A. (Crewe)
 Warde, Lt.-Col. C. E. (Kent)

Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (I. of Wight)
 Welby, Lt.-Col. A. C. E.
 Wharton, Rt. Hn. John Lloyd
 Whiteley, Geo. (Stockport)
 Whitmore, Chas. Algernon
 Williams, Col. R. (Dorset)
 Williams, J. Powell- (Birm.)
 Willox, Sir J. Archibald
 Wilson, John (Falkirk)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart
 Wylie, Alexander
 Yerburch, Robt. Armstrong
 Young, Com. (Berks, E.)
 Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Allen, W. (Newc.-under-Lyme)
 Allison, Robert Andrew
 Asher, Alexander
 Ashton, Thomas Gair
 Asquith, Rt. Hon. H. Henry
 Atherley-Jones, L.
 Austin, Sir J. (Yorkshire)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. B. (Clackm.)
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Bayley, Thos. (Derbyshire)
 Bhownaggee, Sir M. M.
 Billson, Alfred
 Birrell, Augustine
 Brunner, Sir J. Tomlinson
 Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
 Burns, John
 Burt, Thomas
 Buxton, Sydney Charles
 Caldwell, James
 Cameron, Sir C. (Glasgow)
 Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
 Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson-
 Causton, Richard Knight
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Crombie, John William
 Curran, Thos. (Sligo, S.)
 Dalbiac, Col. Philip Hugh
 Daly, James
 Dalziel, James Henry
 Davies, M. Vaughan-Cardigan
 Dilke, Rt. Hn. Sir Chas.
 Dillon, John
 Donelan, Captain A.
 Douglas, C. M. (Lanark)
 Duckworth, James
 Dunn, Sir William
 Farquharson, Dr. Robert
 Fenwick, Charles
 Ferguson, R. C. M. (Leith)
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Foster, Sir W. (Derby Co.)
 Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
 Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Gold, Charles
 Gounley, Sir E. Temperley
 Grey, Sir E. (Berwick)
 Griffith, Ellis J.

Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
 Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Harwood, George
 Hayne, Rt. Hon. C. Seale-
 Hazell, Walter
 Hedderwick, T. Chas. H.
 Holden, Sir Angus
 Holland, W. H. (York, W. R.)
 Horniman, Fredk. John
 Hutton, A. E. (Morley)
 Johnson-Ferguson, Jabez E.
 Joicey, Sir James
 Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)
 Jones, W. (Carnarvonshire)
 Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.
 Kearley, Hudson E.
 Kinloch, Sir J. Geo. Smyth
 Kitson, Sir James
 Lawson, Sir W. (Cumb'land)
 Leese, Sir J. F. (Accrington)
 Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Lewis, John Herbert
 Lloyd-George, David
 Lough, Thomas
 Lyell, Sir Leonard
 Macaleese, Daniel
 McArthur, W. (Cornwall)
 McKenna, Reginald
 McLeod, John
 Maddison, Fred.
 Madden, John Henry
 Mappin, Sir Fredk. Thorpe
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
 Moore, Arthur (Londonderry)
 Morgan, J. L. (Carmarthen)
 Morgan, W. P. (Merthyr)
 Morley, Charles (Brecknock)
 Morton, E. J. C. (Devonport)
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Norton, Captain Cecil W.
 Nussey, Thomas Willans
 O'Brien, J. F. X. (Cork)
 O'Connor, A. (Donegal)
 O'Connor, J. (Wicklow, W.)
 Paulton, James Mellor
 Pease, A. E. (Cleveland)
 Pease, J. A. (Northumb.)
 Philipps, John Wynford

Pirie, Duncan V.
 Power, Patrick Joseph
 Price, Robert John
 Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
 Reid, Sir Robt. Threshie
 Roberts, J. Bryn (Eifon)
 Roberts, J. H. (Denbighs.)
 Robertson, Edmund (Dundee)
 Robson, William Snowdon
 Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
 Schwann, Charles E.
 Scoble, Sir Andrew R.
 Scott, C. Prestwich (Leigh)
 Shaw, C. Edw. (Stafford)
 Shaw, T. (Hawick Burghs)
 Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
 Spicer, Albert
 Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
 Steadman, William Chas.
 Strachey, Edward
 Stuart, James (Shoreditch)
 Sullivan, D. (Westmeath)
 Tennant, Harold John
 Thomas, A. (Carmarthen, E.)
 Thomas, A. (Glamorgan, E.)
 Thomas, D. A. (Merthyr)
 Trevelyan, Chas. Philips
 Wallace, Robt. (Edinburgh)
 Wallace, Robt. (Perth)
 Walton, J. Lawson (Leeds, S.)
 Warner, T. Courtenay T.
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Weir, James Galloway
 Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams, J. Carvell (Notts.)
 Wills, Sir William Henry
 Wilson, Fredk. W. (Norfolk)
 Wilson, H. J. (York, W. R.)
 Wilson, John (Govan)
 Woodall, William
 Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Huddersf'd)
 Woods, Samuel
 Young, S. (Cavan, E.)
 Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Pickersgill and Mr.
 Lowles. *ed by Google*

Another Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 27, after the word 'councillors' to insert the words 'provided that no woman shall be eligible for any such office.'"—
(*Mr. Boulnois.*)

Question put—

"That those words be inserted."

MR. BOULNOIS said he might seem ungallant, but someone must have the courage of his convictions in this matter, and although it might be unpopular for him to take this line, if not in that House, at all events, out of doors, he felt very strongly on the subject, and hoped the House would take advantage of that occasion to come to some definite conclusion upon it. The reason why he thought women should not be allowed to sit on these new borough councils was that women were not adapted to the work which those new councils had to carry out. Much of that work would necessarily be distasteful to them. The elections to the borough councils would be conducted largely on political lines, and the proceedings of the councils would also be to a great extent political, and, in his opinion, it would be a pity to drag women into the turmoil of an election on political lines and cause them to live afterwards in a political atmosphere. It was all very well, and, indeed, quite proper that women should devote themselves to work on boards of guardians and school boards, where they could do excellent womanly work. If they once allowed women to sit on these new councils they would not be able to withhold from them the Parliamentary franchise nor the right to sit and to vote in the House. Women had not at present the right to sit on provincial corporations, but if they were once allowed to sit on these new metropolitan councils a similar privilege would have to be extended to women in the provinces.

SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said he agreed with the honourable Member in the discreditable circumstances of the contradictions of former Acts, which left in the hands of the courts of law matters which Parliament ought to have dealt with. He maintained that Parliament was now bound to settle this question in clear and emphatic language so that none of those doubts could possibly arise after-

wards which had arisen under other Acts of Parliament. The honourable Member said that women made excellent members of boards of guardians and of school boards, but they could never make suitable members for sanitary authorities. But the very powers which the honourable Member had read out to the Committee were merely the ordinary powers of sanitary authorities which existed not only in London, but throughout the whole of the sanitary authorities in the country, while women were found to be doing most excellent work as district councillors, and were exercising the whole of these sanitary powers throughout the rural districts of the country at the present time. Parliament had already given women the right of membership, not on town councils, but on other bodies exercising precisely similar functions. They were elected by popular vote to these bodies, of which they made most useful members; no question of principle was involved, and he was bound to ask the Committee to extend to London the same eligibility of free choice to the electors that they had extended towards the rural districts. He would give reasons why he believed that under the Bill as it stood at present women were eligible not only as councillors, but also for the higher offices of mayor and aldermen in the proposed metropolitan boroughs. The Government were relying on clause 2, sub-section 3, of the Local Government Act of 1888, under which a woman could not be chairman or alderman of a county council, applying to this Bill. But the Local Government Act of 1888, by section 2, sub-section 1, and section 75, applied the Municipal Corporations Act of 1882. By section 15, sub-section 1, of that Act, the mayor was chosen from "aldermen, councillors, or persons qualified to be such," and, by section 14, sub-section 3, an alderman must be "a councillor, or qualified to be a councillor." Thus, anyone could be mayor or alderman of a borough or chairman or alderman of a county who was "qualified to be a councillor" of the borough or county, and the only reason why a woman could not be chairman or alderman of a county council was that given by the judges when they decided that Lady Sandhurst was not qualified to be a councillor. He submitted that clause 2, sub-section 3,

could not make the qualification to be mayor or alderman of a metropolitan borough depend on the qualification to be a county councillor, that was, the being "burgesses" or "county electors." There were no burgesses or county electors for metropolitan boroughs. The sub-section would be held to mean that, just as county chairmen and aldermen must be persons qualified to be county councillors, so the metropolitan mayors and aldermen must be persons qualified to be metropolitan councillors. This included women.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I rise on behalf of the Government, not to give any guidance to the Committee on the subject, but to say that the Government, as a Government, are incapable of giving any guidance upon it. As a matter of fact, when the Division comes it will be found that this Bench does not always go into the same Lobby, and there is a difference of opinion on the subject, which it has never been found possible to bring within the ordinary rule and compass of Party Divisions. My own view, for what it is worth, is, on the whole, against the Amendment of my honourable Friend. I entirely agree with him and the right honourable Baronet that the question should be put out of doubt one way or the other, and the Bill was introduced in its present shape, not because we supposed in that shape the question was decided in a clear and specific manner, but because we were distinctly of opinion that it was expedient not to lay down any line in the Bill for the reason I have already indicated, but that the House should be left to determine one way or the other what the position of women was to be on these future borough councils. The House ought to lay that down one way or the other in the most explicit manner and ought not to leave it to the chances of the courts of law to interpret what the right honourable Gentleman has told us is a very obscure question. Of that I think there can be no doubt. If the state of the law with regard to the existing vestries had been similar to the law with regard to borough councils outside London, I confess I should have been disposed, on the general line adopted in drafting the Bill, to follow the example set by the borough councils outside London, and I should not have

thought it necessary or desirable to make any change in the position of women in connection with them. But, as a matter of fact, Parliament has, to a certain extent, prejudged this question. No longer ago than the year 1894 we deliberately resolved that women were proper persons to exercise the administrative functions which, in the main, are the very administrative functions which are to be given to these borough councils. If, therefore, we adopt my honourable Friend's suggestion we, rightly or wrongly, go back upon the decision to which we have already come, and this Bill would be so far a disfranchising Bill. I should be rather reluctant that this Measure should be in any respect a disfranchising Measure. We have to deal with a state of things already in existence and already working satisfactorily. I am rather reluctant, therefore, to make any change in the backward direction, just in the same way as I should have been rather reluctant to make any change in the forward direction had we found that the privileges of women in regard to London vestries had been identical with the privileges on these borough councils outside London. I am the more reluctant to make the change because I am given to understand that where women have been elected on vestries, the work they have done has been very effective and most beneficial; and it does seem rather hard that when the sex have been engaged in a particular work and have carried out that work in a satisfactory manner the House should take the occasion of a great reform to restrict their sphere of usefulness where their action has been so satisfactory up to the present. That is the broad ground upon which, personally, I shall vote against my honourable Friend's Amendment. But he threw out one argument upon which I think I ought to say a word, though perhaps it is not a proper argument for this House to deal with in detail. My honourable Friend said that this was the thin end of the wedge, that the maintenance of women in the privileges they have already got in the case of the vestries would practically facilitate the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women, and ultimately to the power of obtaining seats in this House. I do not argue whether it is right or wrong that women

should have the Parliamentary franchise, or a seat in this House, but I am inclined to think that the granting of the privilege of a seat upon these new municipal bodies is rather antagonistic to the claim of women to the Parliamentary franchise, and would rather militate against their obtaining that franchise than otherwise. The reason I think so is this. I am in favour of extending the Parliamentary franchise to women, but I have always felt that one of the dangers of that course is that upon the possession of the franchise women might found a claim for a seat in this House—a state of things which, personally, I should regard as absolutely intolerable. It is quite evident that every case in which the House having already granted the franchise to women adds to it the right of women to sit in the bodies for which they vote makes the argument which frightens moderate women suffrage advocates like myself all the stronger, and, while I do not think the House should be unnecessarily influenced by the effect of that argument, personally, I think the admission of women to seats on these borough councils does very much frighten the more timid and weak-kneed of the supporters, among whom I rank myself. I have not the slightest idea how the Committee will vote on this Amendment. I have not been able to form the slightest conjecture as to how the balance of opinion on the question goes within these walls. But if my honourable Friend is defeated, it may be some consolation to him to think that the effect of that defeat will probably be to weaken the support of many of those who are in favour of the extension of the political franchise to women. I do not think it is necessary for me to say more on the subject. As I have said, I have spoken simply as an individual, and in no sense as the representative of the Government, and the Committee must decide this important and interesting question without the advantage or disadvantage—I do not know which it is—of Government assistance.

MR. ASQUITH (Fife, E.): I am glad to find myself on this occasion in agreement with the First Lord of the Treasury, because in days gone by we had taken many different views—I do not know that either of us have changed our

First Lord of the Treasury.

minds upon the subject—as to the expediency of granting the Parliamentary franchise to women; and I take a note for further use of the important admission of the right honourable Gentleman that, though he is in favour of extending the Parliamentary franchise to women, he cannot contemplate with anything but horror the presence of women as colleagues in the House.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Hear, hear!

MR. ASQUITH: I think the position of the right honourable Gentleman in the matter was illogical, and I take a more logical view, I think. If women were qualified to vote, they ought to be qualified to be elected; and, sharing as I do the right honourable Gentleman's terrors in regard to the prospect of female competitors for seats in the House, I take the best course to prevent that state of things by opposing the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women. That being so, I wish to say as to the Amendment, that I cordially agree with the right honourable Gentleman that it would be intolerable to have women sitting in this House. I think if it were carried it would be reactionary in its character, because it would dispossess women of a right they at present enjoyed, and which they exercised with advantage to the community; and believing, as I do, that it is most desirable and most useful in every way to have the influence of women in municipal work, I shall vote with what I believe to be the great majority of this House in favour of the Amendment.

EARL PERCY (Kensington, S.) said that in his opinion, if the female element was imported into the borough council, the effect of that would be to make the Act absolutely ridiculous. It had been pointed out in the course of a discussion that the desire was to assimilate the new boroughs to existing corporations, and bring the whole system of the corporations of London into line; but in none of those corporations were women allowed to sit at the present time. There were only three broad grounds upon which the introduction of the female element into these new councils could be allowed. One of those reasons was

that by excluding them, women would be deprived of a right that they already possessed. A second was that they had some peculiar fitness for discharging the duties which they would have to perform, and the third was that suffrage and representation ought to go together. The third reason was not arguable, in his opinion, because it was not followed in practice; and he instanced the fact that the clergy were allowed to vote for Parliament, but that they were not allowed to sit in the House; and the same reason applied to the county councils. With regard to the first suggestion, that they would deprive women of a right which they at present possessed, that was an argument against most of the reforms that had been brought about during the past half-century. The only real strong argument for rejecting the Amendment was that women had some peculiar qualification for the discharge of municipal duties. He had great sympathy with that view, and he thought that women had performed very good work upon the vestries in the past in various ways, and if it were thought inadvisable to deprive them of the opportunity of rendering public service on the new councils, there was no reason why they should not be co-opted on various committees, such as the library committee and the public health committee. There were two very strong arguments against the direct election to the borough councils. He failed to see if women were elected to the council how they could prevent them from being appointed aldermen or mayors. The really strong argument in support of the Amendment was that direct popular election, whatever it might be in the case of men, was not the best method in the case of women to secure those best qualified for service. It might very well be that women who were well qualified to perform these duties, whose modesty would not permit them to go through the turmoil of a contested election, and those women would be disqualified altogether. If it was proposed to elect them as aldermen, he could see no reason why they should be directly elected. He hoped that the majority of the Committee would vote against the inclusion of women by direct elections in favour of their inclusion by the more indirect process of co-optation.

*MR. COURTNEY was afraid that he was unable to agree with the noble Lord. It appeared to him that the noble Lord's speech was governed more by sentiment than by reason, and he hoped he would be forgiven if he said that the noble Lord in his remarks was too much the slave of logic on the one side, and a little wanting in experience of elections in which women took part on the other. The noble Lord had admitted that women had done good work in local affairs in the past, and he was not disposed to do anything to make their position in that work more difficult. He was not disposed to interfere with the organisation of school boards, still less would he interfere in any way with their election to boards of guardians, and in these matters it was absolutely essential that women should go through all the difficulties of a contested election, and that they should obtain the suffrage of their fellow citizens. Did not experience, therefore, dissipate the anxiety he had that the fair reputation of women would be injured by their participation in these contests in order to arrive at the work they did upon these bodies? The noble Lord admitted that he would not say a word against those who had gone through a contested election, and had been successful, and all that he could urge was that there were other ladies equally, or perhaps better, suited to fulfil the positions, who shrank from contests, and who would be unable to take a share in the municipal work if they were required to go through this ordeal. He claimed, when he had the privilege of submitting to the House an Amendment, that no woman should be disqualified from being chosen as an alderman, the vote of the noble Lord, and if by that vote his Amendment could be carried, they would secure places both for women who were capable of facing the contest, and for superior ladies who were unequal to the struggle of a fight. The noble Lord said if women were made eligible to serve as aldermen under this Bill, then it would have to make them eligible for the position of mayor. That was a question which, he thought, would have to be determined by utilitarian arguments drawn from experience. The advantage on the one side would have to be balanced with the disadvantages on the other. The noble Lord admitted

the expediency and desirability of making women eligible as aldermen by co-optation, but he disapproved of them being made mayors. That fact alone showed that his logic was faulty in assuming that because they were eligible for aldermen they must be eligible for mayors. There was one really good reason why women should not be eligible to be made mayors, and that was that a mayor was a justice of the peace, and had therefore totally different functions and totally different duties from those appertaining to either an alderman or a councillor. Looking at the matter logically, he thought that women should be eligible both as elective members and non-elective members of the new bodies. He was glad that this Amendment had been brought forward, because it was necessary that the matter should be cleared up. In the Bill as it stood he had good reason for believing that women were eligible to serve both as aldermen and mayors. In the Act of 1894 there was an express provision that no person should, by reason of sex or marriage, be disqualified from acting as a councillor, and if the provision under that clause as it now stood applied to aldermen as well, there was a strong presumption for the conclusion that under the Bill as it now stood no woman would be disqualified from acting as an alderman. He wanted to have the matter made plain, and he hoped that an opportunity would be given by-and-by of voting upon the question. He recalled the experience of 1894, when the Government of the day endeavoured to deal with this question, as the Government were doing now, by frankly declining to express their opinion on the subject. On that occasion a direct instruction was moved and carried against the Government that no person should be disqualified by reason of sex or marriage. The experience they had had since demonstrated the wisdom of that act. They need not go into any *a priori* arguments, nor need they talk about sentiment, or what women were fitted for according to the conception obtained from books. They had got experience of women in actual life, and they proved their own use, and they were now going to try and take away the capacity for work which they had already got, and which they had exercised so much to the good of the community and themselves. But they could

not take away what had been already given. And the real question was whether they should be eligible as aldermen as they were eligible under the Bill, and as they would continue to be under the Bill, as councillors. When the question came up again, he would look with confidence to the Committee agreeing by a large majority to the proposition that women should be made eligible to sit as aldermen as well as councillors of these new borough councils.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir R. FINLAY (Inverness Burghs)) said he did not rise to discuss the legal question involved as to whether women should be eligible to sit as aldermen and mayors, and he thought it would be an inexcusable waste of time for the Committee to argue the question. It would be absurd for the Bill to go out in a form in which any subsequent doubt could arise, and therefore it was not perhaps out of order, as this Amendment covered the whole ground of councillors, aldermen, and mayors, to say a few words with reference to those positions. With regard to councillors, they found the women in possession, and he was told that they had done very good work, and that they had done it well. If they had been starting afresh, he would say, perhaps, it would have been better that women should not be eligible, but he was not so strong upon that subject as to say that he should vote for their being turned out of positions which they had occupied for some years, and where according to the confession of everybody, they had done good work. The only objection he had heard to the service of women on these bodies was that of his noble Friend the Member for Kensington, who said it would be unbecoming that they should stand the racket of a contested election.

EARL PERCY said what he had pointed out was that some women would be qualified to stand it, and others would not.

SIR R. FINLAY said that objection would not apply to their being aldermen, if there was a power of co-opting aldermen. He thought his noble Friend's argument went to show that there was no substantial objection to

their being aldermen if they could come on by co-optation. He confessed that there was a certain grotesqueness in the application of the term "aldermen" to women, but after a few years he supposed they would get used to it. It would certainly be a little ridiculous if women could be councillors and could not be aldermen. He agreed with his right honourable Friend the Member for Bedfordshire that different considerations were involved in the case of the mayor, who was a magistrate *ex officio*. It seemed to him that the simpler course would be to say that women should not be qualified to become mayors, although they should be qualified to be councillors and aldermen. Under all the circumstances, he intended to vote against the Amendment, but he certainly was not prepared to vote in favour of women being admitted to the rank of mayor.

MR. HALDANE said he thought they would be well advised in keeping the controversy within the narrowest limits. There was one observation of the Solicitor-General with which he entirely agreed. Whatever view might be taken as to the legal construction of the Bill, they could not shut their eyes to the fact that women were in possession, and that the Amendment proposed to turn them out. The local government of London, as far as the field which they were trying to cover by this Bill was concerned, was at present to a very large extent in the hands of women. They sat upon the vestries, they took their part on the district boards, they sat upon the school boards, and if the Amendment were adopted they would be disfranchising women to a very large extent. What they had to decide was whether they would or would not accept an Amendment that would deter women from a number of the functions they were at present performing, which was quite a different question from the much larger one of the franchise, which had been debated in the House with great diversity of opinion, and which seemed to involve still larger considerations than those which were before the Committee. What reason was there why they should turn women out of the functions they were performing? Had those functions

not been performed usefully? The work that had been done by women, on the school boards especially, had been of the very best description.

MR. BOND (Nottingham, E.) said he held very strongly to the view that the Parliamentary franchise should not be granted to women, but he did not on that account consider that women were, or should be, disqualified from performing certain public services, which, he thought, they could perform with great advantage to the community. He would be ungrateful if he, who had been a School Board member and had had the opportunity of seeing how zealously and efficiently lady members performed their duties, did not lift his voice and say that, for certain branches of public work, they were admirably qualified. With regard to sanitary matters, which his honourable Friend the Member for Marylebone seemed to think the delicate mind of a woman would never be brought to give its attention to, if his honourable Friend would carry his mind back to the details of his own household administration he would find that the greater part of the work was really guided and directed by the women of the household. Their public spirit carried them through whatever was disagreeable in connection with these matters, and they were admirably fitted to go into the tenement dwellings in London, and where anything was wrong put the law in motion and use their personal influence in getting the occupants of those dwellings to set matters right.

*MR. SPICER (Monmouth Boroughs) said it had been admitted in Committee that night that every position which women had already been elected to fill had been filled with discretion, judgment, and tact. This was not only the case in connection with local government, but there were a large number of other bodies where in recent years women had been admitted, and had been allowed to occupy positions, and where their influence had been distinctly good. The duties to which allusion had been made as unsuitable for women were, after all, simply analogous to what

the great bulk of women were carrying on every day of their lives, and doing with great advantage to themselves and the community. They would be robbing the new boroughs of great opportunities of usefulness if they deprived the electors of the right of electing women. They wanted, whether they approved of every clause of the Bill or not, to draw out the best of the local life of the proposed new districts. He maintained that in the metropolis there were a large number of women who were qualified by their training to render very effective service. In fact, there were some great social evils in connection with the metropolis which would never be even minimised until they had more women on their local bodies, who would go into those matters and bring wholesome and healthy influence to bear. He believed that the advent of women to those municipal boroughs would not only lead to the strengthening of those boroughs, but would infuse life and wholesome influences which would be very much for their advantage. They would be depriving those bodies of a great source of usefulness if they deprived the electors of the right of electing women.

*SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said he thought the Committee were indebted to the honourable Member for Marylebone for enabling them to come to a clear decision on the question, instead of leaving it to the judges to say what they thought Parliament meant. Anyone who knew anything about the existing forms of local government in which women were able to take part knew that their services had been much appreciated. Upon what ground was it sought to place this disability upon women? Women were called upon, with other citizens, to pay rates and contribute to the burdens of local government, and why should they not be allowed to take their own part, not indirectly through them, but directly and through themselves, in the administration of local affairs? All the same objections had been raised to the right of women to vote in local affairs, but the vote had been conceded, for it seemed to him to follow as a corollary that they should have the right to administer local matters in their own districts when they

Mr. Spicer.

fulfilled the same conditions as men and had similar legal and proper qualifications. Objection had been taken that the work to be performed was not suitable for women, but the chief work was sanitation, and the source, the unit, of good sanitation was, after all, the home, the house in which women were the most potent factors in relation to such matters.

*MR. HUBBARD (Lambeth, Brixton) thought it was impossible for honourable Members to say that this was only a matter of detail. It had been said that women were in the position of councillors at the present moment. But that was not the case. Women were allowed to sit on vestries, but not on municipal councils, and it seemed to him that there was a great distinction there. It was impossible for anyone who was cognisant with the organisation of the political bodies in the metropolis to ignore the fact that the new municipal bodies would, whether honourable Members liked it or not, be run on political lines. He entirely agreed with those honourable Members who had borne testimony to the excellent work that women had done as members of boards of guardians and other public bodies, and he was prepared to recognise that fact by allowing women to remain eligible by co-optation for any particular committee on which they might wish to serve, and on which their assistance might be specially useful. But it appeared to him that if the Amendment were rejected it would be regarded outside the House as a deliberate affirmation of the principle that women should enter political life. He was one who viewed with the utmost reluctance—he might say with horror—the intrusion of women into political life. Moreover, he did not think it right to impose on women duties which he did not believe the great majority desired to perform.

Question put—

“That these words be there inserted.”

The Committee divided:—Ayes 101; Noes 127.—(Division List No. 104.)

AYES.

Arland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
 Allhusen, Augustus Henry Eden
 Anstruther, H. T.
 Arol, Sir William
 Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
 Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell
 Barry, Rt. Hon. A. H. Smith (Hunts)
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Barton, Dunbar Plunket
 Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
 Bemrose, Sir Henry Howe
 Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
 Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
 Burdett-Coutts, W.
 Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbyshire)
 Cayzer, Sir Charles William
 Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (Birm.)
 Chamberlain, J. A.usten (Worc'r)
 Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Charrington, Spencer
 Clarke, Sir Edward (Plymouth)
 Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
 Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Cornwallis, Fiennes Stanley W.
 Cox, Irwin Edward B. (Harrow)
 Cruddas, William Donaldson
 Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
 Donelan, Captain A.
 Donkin, Richard Sim
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
 Duxford, William Theodore
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert B.

Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
 Fellowes, Hn. Ailwyn Edward
 Finch, George H.
 Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Forster, Henry William
 Garfit, William
 Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H. (City of Lond)
 Gibbs, Hon. Vicary (St. Albans)
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hon. John Edward
 Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
 Green, Walford L. (Wendnesbury)
 Hall, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord George
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Heath, James
 Henderson, Alexander
 Hermon-Hodge, Robert Trotter
 Hill, Sir Edward Stock (Bristol)
 Hutton, John (Yorks. N. R.)
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
 Kenyon-Slaney, Col. William
 Knowles, Leos
 Lawrence, Sir E. D. (Cornwall)
 Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
 Long, Rt. Hon. Walter (Liverpool)
 Lorne, Marquess of
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Macartrey, W. G. Ellison
 Marks, Harry H.
 Melville, Beresford Valentine
 Moore, William (Antrim, N.)

More, Robt. Jasper (Shropshire)
 Morton, Arthur H. A. (Deptford)
 Nicholson, William Graham
 O'Connor, Arthur (Donegal)
 Pease, Alfred E. (Cleveland)
 Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
 Percy, Earl
 Phillpotts, Captain Arthur
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Pollock, Harry Frederick
 Power, Patrick Joseph
 Priestley, Sir W. Overend (Edin.)
 Purvis, Robert
 Renshaw, Charles Bine
 Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. Thomson
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. M.
 Seoble, Sir Andrew Richard
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stock, James Henry
 Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray
 Valentia, Viscount
 Wharton, Rt. Hon. John Lloyd
 Williams, Col. R. (Dorset)
 Williams, Joseph Powell (Birm.)
 Wilson, John (Falkirk)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Mr. Boulnois and Mr.
 Hubbard.

NOES.

Allison, Robert Andrew
 Anstin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
 Baird, John George Alexander
 Baker, Sir John
 Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r)
 Balfour, Rt. Hon. Gerald W. (Leeds)
 Begg, Ferdinand Faithfull
 Bethell, Commander
 Bhowaggee, Sir M. M.
 Bigwood, James
 Burns, John
 Burt, Thomas
 Buxton, Sydney Charles
 Caldwell, James
 Causton, Richard Knight
 Clare, Octavius Leigh
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Cotton-Jodrell, Col. Edw. T. D.
 Courtney, Rt. Hon. Leonard H.
 Curran, Thomas (Sligo, S.)
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Daly, James
 Davies, M. Vaughan (Cardigan)
 Denny, Colonel
 Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Dillon, John
 Dunn, Sir William
 Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir William Hart
 Fardell, Sir T. George

Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
 Fisher, William Hayes
 FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
 Fry, Lewis
 Gibbons, J. Lloyd
 Gladstone, Rt. Hon. Herbert John
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Gold, Charles
 Korst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon
 Goulding, Edward Alfred
 Gouriey, Sir Edward Temperley
 Graham, Henry Robert
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Grey, Sir Edward (Berwick)
 Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Harwood, George
 Hayne, Rt. Hon. Charles Seale
 Hedderwick, Thos. C. H.
 Hegan, James Francis
 Holden, Sir Angus
 Holland, Hon. Lionel R. (Dow)
 Holland, Wm. H. (York, W. R.)
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Houston, R. P.
 Howell, William Tudor
 Hughes, Colonel Edwin
 Hutton, Alfred E. (Morley)
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Joynstone, Heywood (Sussex)
 Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)

Kemp, George
 Kimber, Henry
 Lafone, Alfred
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
 Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb'land)
 Lea, Sir Thomas (Londonderry)
 Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington)
 Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Lloyd-George, David
 Lowles, John
 Lyell, Sir Leonard
 Macaleese, Daniel
 Macdona, John Cumming
 McArthur, Charles (Liverpool)
 McKillop, James
 McLeod, John
 Maddison, Fred.
 Middlemore, John Throgmorton
 Monckton, Edward Philip
 Monk, Charles James
 Morton, Edw. J. C. (Devonport)
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Northcote, Hon. Sir H. Stafford
 Norton, Capt. Cecil William
 O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
 Paulton, James Mellor
 Philipps, John Wynford
 Pickard, Benjamin
 Pickersgill, Edward Hare
 Pirie, Duncan V.
 Pryce-Jones, Lt. Col. Edward

Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
 Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrona)
 Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
 Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
 Skewes-Cox, Thomas
 Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Spicer, Albert
 Steadman, William Charles
 Stone, Sir Benjamin

Strutt, Hon. Charles Hedley
 Stuart, James (Shoreditch)
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
 Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
 Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr)
 Thorburn, Walter
 Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir William H.
 Walton, John Lawson (Leeds, S)
 Weir, James Galloway
 Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams John Carvell (Notts.)

Wills, Sir William Henry
 Wilson, Frederick W. (Norfolk)
 Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Huddersfield)
 Woods, Samuel
 Wylie, Alexander
 Young, Commander (Berks, E.)
 Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Bond and Mr. Lough.

On the return of the CHAIRMAN, after the usual interval—

Another Amendment proposed—

" Clause 2, page 1, line 27, after 'councillors,' insert 'Neither sex nor marriage shall be a disqualification for election or appointment to any office under this Act.' "—(Mr. Lough.)

MR. LOUGH said it was agreed by everybody in the Debate just before the adjournment that words should be inserted here to make the meaning of the House clear in regard to the position of women in those boroughs which they proposed to create. He thought the words were, perhaps, the best that could be suggested for that purpose, and they had also been put down on the Paper from the other side of the House by his honourable Friend the Member for Hackney. They raised the issue clearly, and dealt with women not only as councillors, but as aldermen and mayors, and as eligible for all appointments under the Bill. The honourable Member for Marylebone was treasurer of the London Municipal Society, which had officially stated that its policy was to include the eligibility of women to serve on municipal councils; and he thought it strange that the honourable Member should have moved an Amendment in the opposite sense. It had been pointed out that they might prejudice the question of the Parliamentary franchise for women by deciding the issue in the Bill before the Committee. He did not think any attention should be paid to that fear. He did not suppose that those who opposed the Parliamentary franchise for women did so as much on principle as from expediency. There was another principle than expediency in giving women the full municipal franchise. He would like to remind the Committee that in the English Districts Councils Act of 1894 women were made eligible

for these boards, and even to be appointed chairmen of the boards, although a clause was inserted which precluded them from being justices of the peace when elected chairmen. If necessary, some such clause could be inserted in the present Bill. The Irish Local Government Act passed last year also admitted women practically to the same rights which they asked for them in London. He found that under that Act four women had been elected to urban district councils, and 27 on rural districts councils, and 82 as poor law guardians. Therefore, all the precedents were in favour of adopting the course he now suggested.

Attention having been called to the fact that there were not 40 Members present, the House was counted, when 40 Members being present—

MR. LOUGH went on to say that several women had been appointed in Ireland as chairmen and vice-chairmen of councils under the recent Act. There were already 17 women serving on vestries and district boards in different parts of London, and he did not believe that there could be found in London 17 more efficient representatives. There were large departments of work in the new borough-councils in which women could render the greatest possible service—for instance, in the development of baths and wash-houses, one of the most excellent institutions which the vestries had planted in London.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES did not think the honourable Member need devote himself to that part of the question. The Committee had already decided that women were eligible as members of the councils; the only question now was the form of the words in which the decision of the Committee was to be put.

Mr. LOUGH said he accepted the suggestion of the Chairman, and he would simply move the Amendment standing in his name.

Question proposed—

"That those words be there inserted."

SIR R. FINLAY said that, of course, as the First Lord of the Treasury has stated in the Debate on the last Amendment, this was not really a Party question in the ordinary sense of the word, and in anything he might say he was not speaking on behalf of the Government, but only expressing his individual opinion. The Committee had just negatived an Amendment which would have excluded women from holding any office whatever under the proposed Act, but it did not follow from that decision that women should be eligible for all these offices. So far as his own individual opinion was concerned, he agreed with the honourable Member for Bodmin that it was not desirable that women should hold the office of mayor. He thought that the office of mayor should be reserved for the male sex only, and he suggested that the Amendment should run—

"No woman shall be eligible for the office of mayor; but neither sex nor marriage shall be a disqualification for the office of alderman or councillor."

MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said that women might be very useful in regard to bath-houses and libraries, but he ventured to think that the new borough councils would be in rather an anomalous position according to English ideas if women were to be admitted to either the office of mayor or alderman. They had gone so far in America that he understood there was one corporation in which there was not a single man. He hoped that the Government, in the interest of their Bill, would take steps to prevent women being either aldermen or mayors, and he would move to exclude them from the office of alderman as well as mayor.

*MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield) said he could not for the life of him draw a distinction between the position of women as councillors and as mayors. The principle adopted should be, Trust in the good sense and discretion

of the electors. If the electors were fortunate enough to have among them a woman fit to be a mayor, he did not see why Parliament should deny them the right to appoint her a mayor. Whenever a woman was fit to occupy a public office, or to discharge a public duty, the law should not interfere to deprive the woman of the opportunity of doing so. This was a Measure for the extension of Governmental rights, and it ought not to be made use of as a means of depriving women of offices in the new boroughs which they had already occupied in existing bodies.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"At the beginning, to insert the words 'no woman shall be eligible for the office of mayor, but:—'—(*Mr. Herbert Robertson.*)

MR. STUART hoped the words would remain as they were in the Amendment proposed by the honourable Member for Islington, so as to leave all the offices open to women. One of the grounds on which they allowed women to remain as councillors, and therefore as aldermen, was that they were at present eligible as councillors. There was a general opinion expressed in the House that they should not disfranchise women, and that eligibility as a councillor carried with it the right to be an alderman. One reason why it was peculiarly suitable that women should be elected as aldermen was that there were many cases in which some women who could do good work on the councils would not go through the turmoil of an election. He would remind the Committee that under the law at present women were eligible as chairmen of vestries and local boards, which were now about to be turned into borough councils. He quite admitted that a larger question was opened up by the fact that those who were mayors of the new borough councils would have a right to sit on the bench as justices of the peace. But under the present law, women were excluded from sitting on the bench, although they were chairmen of the local bodies. The same exclusion could be carried into the new

borough council, leaving the women, although deprived of the right to sit as justices of the peace, to retain the right of taking the chair and acting as mayor. The Amendment asked that women should be eligible for the various offices under the Act, but they had very little specific information as to what women were doing on the London vestries and in offices other than those of aldermen and councillors. He did not know whether the Solicitor-General was aware that in the vestry of St. George-the-Martyr, Southwark, there was a lady inspector who had been appointed for measuring up and carrying out the registration among the lowest class of houses, and in seeing that the regulations known as the tenement by-laws were carried out. She had been at work for a couple of years, and the result, as far as he was informed, was that she had abundantly justified the action of the vestry concerned in appointing her. She had been very successful in the overcrowding cases, and she had been obliged to take only ten overcrowding cases into court, and in every case she obtained a conviction. He could not see why the position of mayor should not be filled just as well by a woman as by a man, especially when they saw the class of work the women on the vestries had been carrying out. Under exceptional circumstances a lady might be a most suitable chairman. In the parish of St. Martin's a lady was one of the most respected members of the vestry. She served on the general purposes, the parliamentary, the finance, and the lighting committees, and she had been appointed by the vestry as an overseer. There was also an extremely important committee upon which ladies had sat with great advantage called the reception house committee, the house being a building for those families who came from one- and two-roomed tenements while their rooms were being disinfected. The system used to be very hateful to the inhabitants, and was objected to just as much as the workhouse until it was conducted by the women on the vestry, who had made such arrangements now that it was readily used by the people concerned. Those were a few instances of the work of ladies on the vestries. In London there were something short of 20 women on the various vestries, and

Mr. Stuart.

in all cases he thought they had the complete confidence and esteem of those on the vestry.

SIR R. FINLAY, interposing, said he thought the question of other officers was rather out of order in the discussion of the clause dealing with the constitution of the councils.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: The only question now before the Committee is the Amendment to the Amendment, that is to say, whether women may become mayors.

MR. STUART argued that if the Amendment to the Amendment was before the Committee he would not be in order in supporting the original Amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: I have only put the Motion that no woman shall be eligible for the office of mayor.

MR. STUART said if his remarks were not in order in reference to the other offices he would not continue his criticisms, but would resume them later on. In the vestries and district boards they had already admitted that the women were not to be struck off, and he did not see why they should now exclude them from being mayors; but whilst leaving that point open let them attach to the position the same disability which was attached to it at present, namely, that they should not be justices of the peace by virtue of that office. He hoped the Amendment would not be carried, and that upon the new bodies this question would be left as it was at present.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) thought this was a most revolutionary House of Commons, because what they were proposing to do practically meant the changing of the whole system of election. They were now in the extraordinary position of debating whether a woman might be a mayor. It seemed to him most extraordinary that they should introduce such a proposal in this extraordinary fashion. He supposed if a woman was fit to be a mayor she was also fit to be a town clerk, a parish constable, or anything else they liked

to name. It seemed to him to be absurd to raise those questions. He hoped this Measure would raise the dignity of the position of the local authorities of the metropolis, but he thought it was bringing the question almost to ridicule to discuss seriously whether they were going to have lady mayors. They would next be asked to discuss whether Mr. Speaker should be a woman.

SIR J. WOODHOUSE (Huddersfield) said they were not going to decide whether women were to be eligible or not, because the Bill proposed to apply the same qualifications as the existing vestries already possessed, and under the law as it at present stood a woman might be the chairman of a vestry. Under these circumstances, what reason could there be for saying that because they set up a borough council and called the chief officer of that body a mayor the law should be altered? He respectfully submitted that the First Lord of the Treasury, by his own argument, had himself disposed of the question whether a woman should or should not be eligible to fill the chair of the council.

MR. LOUGH stated that he fully recognised what had been said, and he did not want women to be mayors. What he did want was that anybody whom the councils thought fit to choose should be made mayor. He did not want to impose any disabilities upon them at all. Why should they make any restrictions with regard to women? This argument had already been laid before the House at considerable length, and he would not further discuss it beyond saying that on the whole it placed a disability on women, and therefore he could not accept it.

MR. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said the honourable Gentleman asked why they should impose a disability on women. He contended that it would be absolutely impossible for a woman to conduct the business of a mayor in a municipality. As they were all perfectly well aware the work was one of great difficulty, and one which required great knowledge of men, and an acquaintance with all matters which came forward, and it would be

absolutely absurd to suppose that any woman could carry out such duties in these new municipalities. The object of this Measure was to improve the government of London, and they did not want to jeopardise the success of the whole Bill by making this new departure. It would, in his opinion, be impossible for a woman to discharge the functions of a mayor, for they must have a man for the office who could control and manage the whole body of the council.

COLONEL MILWARD (Warwick, Stratford-on-Avon) wished to add one word in favour of the argument of his honourable Friend, and that was that he desired to know how far they were going that night. They were going to change the vestries of London into municipalities, and what had been proposed was being done by a side issue. They were proposing, in the course of a few minutes Debate, to make this enormous change in the law for the metropolis, and if they did so they would be called upon to make the same change in regard to the municipalities and county councils all over the country, and he was sure that that would not be a wise policy. It had been decided that women were not eligible for county councillors, and if they were going to make this great change, at all events they should give time to the municipalities and the county councils to consider what they were now proposing to do.

MR. E. J. C. MORTON (Devonport) said the Debate which had taken place illustrated to a certain extent the disingenuousness of the whole aspect of this Bill. They had this Amendment before them to exclude women from being mayors, and they had been told from the opposite side that the proposal to allow women to be mayors was absurd, and that they ought to exclude the possibility of such an absurd thing happening by this Amendment. He submitted that if this was a perfectly absurd idea surely the Government who were setting up those authorities could trust the authorities themselves to settle the matter from their own point of view. If it was absurd, then those who voted for this Amendment were practically voting for

the proposal of the Government to set up authorities which they could not trust, and he submitted that the whole argument was one which marked the proposals of the Government as disingenuous.

Mr. BAYLEY contended that when once they established the principle that women were to be allowed to have seats upon these councils they must allow them to be aldermen, or alderwomen, whichever they like to call it. He hoped his honourable Friend would go to the Division, and if he did he should support him.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS said he desired to correct the Member for North Islington upon one point, for he had

stated that this Amendment handed over the government of municipalities to women. It did nothing of the kind, for it simply allowed the municipalities to exercise their own discretion, which the honourable Member desired to deprive them of.

Mr. McKENNA (Monmouth, N.) held that whoever might be the candidate for the mayoralty, the council themselves were the best judges whether or not a woman should be selected.

Question put—

"That those words be there inserted in the proposed Amendment."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 179; Noes 77.—(Division List No. 105.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
 Allhusen, Augustus Henry Eden
 Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
 Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
 Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
 Baird, John George Alexander
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. Gerald W. (Leeds)
 Banbury, Frederick George
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell
 Barry, Rt. Hn. A. H. Smith (Hunts)
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Barton, Dunbar Plunket
 Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
 Begg, Ferdinand and Faithfull
 Bemrose, Sir Henry Howe
 Bethell, Commander
 Bhowagree, Sir M. M.
 Bigwood, James
 Bolton, Thomas Dolling
 Bond, Edward
 Boulnois, Edmund
 Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
 Burdett-Countt, W.
 Butcher, John George
 Cayzer, Sir Charles William
 Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
 Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r)
 Chaplain, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Clare, Octavius Leigh
 Clarke, Sir Edward (Plymouth)
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
 Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
 Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Cornwallis, Fiennes Stanley W.
 Courtney, Rt. Hn. Leonard H.
 Cox, Irwin Edward B. (Harrow)
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cruddas, William Donaldson
 Cubitt, Hon. Henry
 Curzon, Viscount
 Davenport, W. Bromley
 Denny Colonel

Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
 Donelan, Captain A.
 Donkin, Richard Sim
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers
 Doxford, William Theodore
 Drage, Geoffrey
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
 Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
 Fisher, William Hayes
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Forster, Henry William
 Galloway, William Johnson
 Garfit, William
 Gibbons, J. Lloyd
 Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H. (City of Lond.)
 Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (St. Albans)
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hcn. John Edward
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
 Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
 Gourley, Sir Edward Temperley
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Green, Walford D. (Wednesb'ry)
 Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury)
 Gunter, Colonel
 Hall, Rt. Hn. Sir Charles
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord George
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hardy, Laurence
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Heath, James
 Henderson, Alexander
 Hermon-Hodge, Robert Trotter
 Hill, Sir Edward Stock (Bristol)
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Hobhouse, Henry
 Holland, Hcn. Lionel R. (Bow)

Holland, Wm. H. (York, W.R.)
 Howell, William Tudor
 Howorth, Sir Henry Hoyle
 Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
 Hutton, John (Yorks, N.R.)
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Kemp, George
 Kenyon-Slaney, Col. William
 Kimber, Henry
 Knowles, Lees
 Lafone, Alfred
 Lauria, Lieut.-General
 Lawrence, Sir E. D. (Cornwall)
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
 Lea, Sir Thomas (Londonderry)
 Leigh-Jennett, Henry Currie
 Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
 Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Liverpool)
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lorne, Marquess of
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowles, John
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdonald, John Cumming
 Maclure, Sir John William
 McArthur, William (Cornwall)
 McKillop, James
 Maple, Sir John Blundell
 Marks, Harry H.
 Melville, Bercsford Valentine
 Middenmore, John Throgmorton
 Milward, Colonel Victor
 Monckton, Edward Philip
 Monk, Charles James
 Moore, William (Antrim, N.)
 More, Robt. Jasper (Shropshire)
 Morton, Arthur H. A. (Deptford)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 O'Connor, Arthur (Donegal)

Mr. E. J. C. Morton.

Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, Alfred E. (Cleveland)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington)
Percy, Earl
Phillipotts, Captain Arthur
Pierpoint, Robert
Pollock, Harry Frederick
Priestley, Sir W. Overend (Edin.)
Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy
Renshaw, Charles Bine
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomas
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Russell, T. W. (Tyrones)

Ryder, John Herbert Dudley
Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
Seeley, Charles Hilton
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
Stock, James Henry
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Strauss, Arthur
Strutt, Hon. Charles Hedley
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxford Univ)
Thorburn, Walter

Tritton, Charles Ernest
Valentia, Viscount
Warr, Augustus Frederick
Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of Wight)
Wharton, Rt. Hn. John Lloyd
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
Williams, Joseph Powell (Birm.)
Wilson, John (Falkirk)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong
Young, Commander (Berks, N.)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Sir William Walrond and
Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
Baker, Sir John
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.)
Barlow, John Emmott
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
Billson, Alfred
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Burns, John
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Causton, Richard Knight
Clough, Walter Owen
Colville, John
Cotton-Jodrell, Col. Edw. T. D.
Curran, Thomas (Sligo, S.)
Daly, James
Davies, M. Vaughan (Cardigan)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dunn, Sir William
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gold, Charles
Gourley, Sir Edward Temperley
Graham, Henry Robert

Grey, Sir Edward (Berwick)
Haldane, Richard Burdon
Harwood, George
Hedderwick, Thomas Charles H.
Hogan, James Francis
Holden, Sir Angus
Horniman, Frederick John
Hughes, Colonel Edwin
Hutton, Alfred E. (Morley)
Johnston, William (Belfast)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
Kinloch, Sir John George Smyth
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb'lana)
Leuty, Thomas Richmond
Lyll, Sir Leonard
Macaleese, Daniel
McLeod, John
Maddison, Fred
Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
Morley, Rt. Hn. John (Montrose)
Morton, Edw. J. C. (Devonport)
Moss, Samuel
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
Philipps, John Wynford
Pickersgill, Edward Hare

Pirie, Duncan V.
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
Scott, Chas. Prestwich (Leigh)
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Spicer, Albert
Stendman, William Charles
Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr)
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Walton, John Lawson (Leeds, S.)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams, John Carvell (Notts)
Wills, Sir William Henry
Wilson, Frederick W. (Norfolk)
Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Huddersf'd)
Woods, Samuel
Wylie, Alexander
Younger, William
Yoxhall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Mr. James Stuart and Mr.
Lough.

Another Amendment proposed to the Amendment—

"To leave out the words 'election or appointment to any office under this Act,' and insert the words 'the office of alderman or councillor,' instead thereof."—(Mr. Herbert Robertson.)

Question—

"That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment"

Put, and negatived.

Question proposed—

"That the words 'the office of alderman or councillor' be added to the proposed Amendment."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"To leave out the words 'alderman or.'"—
(Mr. R. G. Webster.)

MR. WEBSTER said that the very term alderman implied a man, and did not apply to a woman, and although the House of Commons could do many things it could not change a woman into a man.

Question put—

"That the words 'alderman or' stand part of the proposed Amendment to the Amendment."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 124;
Noes 155.—(Division List No. 106.)

AYES.

Asher, Alexander
 Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
 Baker, Sir John
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. Gerald W. (Leeds)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.)
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
 Begg, Ferdinand Faithfull
 Bhowaggee, Sir M. M.
 Bigwood, James
 Billson, Alfred
 Bond, Edward
 Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
 Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
 Burns, John
 Burt, Thomas
 Buxton, Sydney Charles
 Caldwell, James
 Causton, Richard Knight
 Clare, Octavius Leigh
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Colston, Chas. E. H. Athole
 Colville, John
 Cotton-Jodrell, Col. E. T. D.
 Courtney, Rt. Hn. Leonard H.
 Curran, Thomas (Sligo, S.)
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Daly, James
 Davies, M. Vaughan (Cardigan)
 Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Dillon, John
 Douglas, Charles M. (Lanark)
 Dunn, Sir William
 Farquharson, Dr. Robert
 Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
 Fry, Lewis
 Galloway, William Johnson
 Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
 Goddard, Daniel Ford

Gold, Charles
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
 Goulding, Edward Alfred
 Gourley, Sir Edw. Temperley
 Graham, Henry Robert
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Grey, Sir Edward (Berwick)
 Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Harwood, George
 Hayne, Rt. Hn. Charles Seale-Hedderwick, Thomas Chas. H.
 Hobbhouse, Henry
 Hogan, James Francis
 Holden, Sir Angus
 Holland, Hon. Lionel R. (Bow)
 Holland, W. H. (York, W.R.)
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Hughes, Colonel Edwin
 Hutton, Alfred E. (Morley)
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
 Kemp, George
 Kinloch, Sir J. George Smyth
 Lafone, Alfred
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb'land)
 Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lough, Thomas
 Lowles, John
 Lyell, Sir Leonard
 Macaleese, Daniel
 Macdona, John Cumming
 McArthur, William (Cornwall)
 McKenna, Reginald
 McLeod, John
 Maddison, Fred
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
 Monckton, Edward Philip
 Monk Charles James
 Morley, Rt. Hn. John (Montrose)
 Morton, Edw. J. C. (Devonport)
 Moss, Samuel

Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Norton, Capt. Cecil William
 Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
 Phillips, John Wynford
 Pickersgill, Edward Hare
 Pirie, Duncan V.
 Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
 Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
 Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
 Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
 Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
 Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B)
 Spicer, Albert
 Steadman, William Charles
 Stuart, Hon. Charles Hedley
 Stuart, James (Shoreditch)
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
 Thomas, Alf d (Glamorgan, E.)
 Thomas, David Alf. (Merthyr)
 Trevelyan, Charles Phillips
 Tritton, Charles Ernest
 Ure, Alexander
 Walton, J. Lawson (Leeds, S.)
 Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams, John Carvell (Notts.)
 Wills, Sir Henry William
 Wilson, Frederick W. (Norfolk)
 Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Huddersf'd)
 Woods, Samuel
 Wylie, Alexander
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong
 Young, Commander (Berks, E.)
 Younger, William
 Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Mr. Herbert Robertson and
 Mr. W. F. D. Smith.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
 Allhusen, Augustus H. Eden
 Anstruther, H. T.
 Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
 Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
 Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
 Baird, John George Alexander
 Banbury, Frederick George
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell
 Barry, Rt. Hn. A. H. Smith (Hunts)
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Barton, Dunbar Plunket
 Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
 Bemrose, Sir Henry Howe
 Bethell, Commander
 Bolton, Thomas Dolling
 Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
 Burdett-Coutts, W.
 Butcher, John George
 Cayzer, Sir Charles William
 Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
 Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r)
 Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Clarke, Sir Edw. (Plymouth)

Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
 Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Cornwallis, Fiennes Stanley W.
 Cox, Irwin Edw. B. (Harrow)
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cruddas, William Donaldson
 Cubitt, Hon. Henry
 Davenport, W. Bromley
 Denny, Colonel
 Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
 Donelan, Captain A.
 Donkin, Richard Sim
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
 Doxford, William Theodore
 Drage, Geoffrey
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
 Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fellowes, Hn. Ailwyn Edward
 Finch, George H.
 Fisher William Hayes
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Folkestone, Viscount

Forster, Henry William
 Garfit, William
 Gibbons, J. Lloyd
 Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H. (City of Lond.)
 Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (St. Albans)
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Gilliat, John Saunders
 Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hon. John Edward
 Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. George's)
 Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
 Green, Walford D. (Wesnesbury)
 Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury)
 Gretton, John
 Gunter, Colonel
 Gurdon, Sir William Brampton
 Hall, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord George
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hardy, Laurence
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Heath, James
 Henderson, Alexander
 Hill, Sir Sdw. Stock (Bristol)

Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Howell, William Tudor
 Howorth, Sir Henry Hoyle
 Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
 Hutton, John (Yorks. N.R.)
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
 Jessell, Capt. Herbert Merton
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Kenyon-Slaney, Col. William
 Kimber, Henry
 Knowles, Lees
 Lawrence, Sir E.D. (Cornwall)
 Lea, Sir Thomas (Londonderry)
 Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
 Llewellyn, Evan H. (Somerset)
 Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
 Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Liverp'l)
 Lorne, Marquess of
 Lowe, Francis William
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Maclure, Sir John William
 McKillop, James
 Maple, Sir John Blundell
 Marks, Harry H.
 Melville, Beresford Valentine
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton

Milbank, Sir Powlett Chas. J.
 Milward, Colonel Victor
 Moore, Arthur (Londonderry)
 Moore, William (Antrim, N.)
 More, Rbt. Jasper (Shropshire)
 Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
 Morton, Arthur H.A. (Deptford)
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. Graham (Bute)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Myers, William Henry
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 O'Connor, Arthur (Donegal)
 Parkes, Ebenezer
 Pease, Alfred E. (Cleveland)
 Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington)
 Percy, Earl
 Phillpotts, Captain Arthur
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Pollock, Harry Frederick
 Priestley, Sir W. O. (Edin.)
 Purvis, Robert
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
 Russell, Gen. F.S. (Cheltenham)
 Ryder, John Herbert Dudley
 Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)

Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Skewes-Cox, Thomas
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Stanley, Lord (Lanca.)
 Stock, James Henry.
 Stone, Sir Benjamin
 Strachey, Edward
 Strauss, Arthur
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.)
 Thorburn, Walter
 Walrond, Rt. Hn. Sir William H.
 Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, Sir R.E. (Isle of Wight)
 Wharton, Rt. Hn. John Lloyd
 Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
 Williams, Jos. Powell (B.rm.)
 Wilson, John (Falkirk)
 Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. R. G. Webster and Mr.
 Boulnois.

Question—

"That the words 'the office of councillor' be added to the proposed Amendment to the Amendment"

Put, and agreed to.

Question proposed—

"That the words 'no woman shall be eligible for the office of mayor, but neither sex nor marriage shall be a disqualification for the office of councillor' be here inserted."

MR. T. H. ROBERTSON said the question had been reduced rather to nonsense, and he suggested that the whole Amendment should therefore be negatived.

MR. DILLON said he did not think the British House of Commons had ever appeared in a more ridiculous light. A noble Lord at an early stage in this absurd discussion brought forward as his chief argument against the admission of women to these so-called boroughs—they were really district councils—that he did not desire to see them subjected to the disagreeable incidents of a popular election. That was recognised by most Members of the House as the strongest objection to the admission of women on the borough

councils. But what had the House of Commons now done? It had closed the one door by which women could get on to those borough councils without submitting to the unpleasantness of a popular election. In the whole history of the House of Commons nothing more idiotic had ever been done. If women were qualified to discharge the proposed functions, as had been proved, then the House of Commons had stultified itself by saying that they should not be allowed to act as aldermen when it had already decided that they might act as councillors. One speaker the other night thought he had summed up the question when he pointed out that if they had a woman as mayor she might require to have a mayor-consort. Was it so very ridiculous that there should be such a thing as a mayor-consort in a country that was proud to live under a Queen whose duties were shared by a Prince-Consort? When the woman question was introduced the House of Commons seemed to lose all touch with logic, reason, and common-sense.

MR. DUNCOMBE (Cumberland, Egremont) quite agreed that the House of Commons had never before appeared so ridiculous, but that was because of the endeavour to place women in a position in which they ought never to be found.

MR. COURTNEY said he agreed with what had been said by the two speakers who immediately preceded him. Although those gentlemen differed in their conclusions they were, he hoped, agreed in condemning what had happened during the last two hours. He did not wish to exasperate the position or intensify the sense of absurdity of what had happened. The matter was perfectly explicable. They had a Debate rather early in the evening and then a Division about half-past eight upon an Amendment altered at the last moment, and as regarded which it might be said that a great many Members did not quite understand what they were voting upon.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: There was no alteration.

MR. COURTNEY said that at any rate they had a Division and now they had had a further Division, the numbers taking part in which showed how considerable had been the increase in the course of the last ten minutes. Out of those who came in to add to the Division how many knew what they were voting about? He ventured to say the real issue was lost in the confusion. Those who came in at the last moment were quite uninformed and hurried to the Lobby one way or other according to chance. All he ventured to suggest at that moment was this—this was not the last word to be spoken on the question in relation to the Bill. When they came to the next stage they might hope to have an issue, clear, distinct, and definite. They would then be well prepared; before then they should know exactly what they were going to vote for, and he for one would be quite prepared to face the verdict of the House of Commons when the issue was so presented. He would only suggest at that moment that they might agree with the conclusion, however lame and impotent some of them might think it to be, at which successive votes had arrived, and then await the next, the inevitable stage, when Members would be able to understand the question that would have to be voted upon with a clearer appreciation of what was before them, and when they might hope to have a real expression, not merely of

the votes, but of the mind of the House of Commons.

MR. BURNS said two hours ago the House of Commons was almost unanimous that women should be councillors. They were less agreed that women should be aldermen, and they were less agreed still about women being mayors. What did they find now? They found that women as mayors had been eliminated, and women as aldermen had been rejected. He sincerely wished that the House of Commons would not make a fool of itself any longer. It would have been better to have voted upon a clear issue, and to have stated boldly and frankly that, in the opinion of the House of Commons, women were unfit to be mayors, aldermen, or councillors. Not having the courage to do that the House of Commons was now in an ungracious and ungallant way, going to secure by a temporary majority what the mind of the House of Commons was directly opposed to a few hours ago. If they did not like women in the sphere of municipal politics, honourable Gentlemen on the other side of the House who mostly took this view should be logical, and have the boldness to say they would also deny them the right of election on councils at all. He appealed to the House of Commons to recognise that they were shutting the door to some of the best citizens that they had in that vast city. In many districts in the East End, where one-room tenements prevailed, it was not only not proper, but it was not decent at certain times for male councillors to enter. In regard to disorderly houses, and in regard to many questions of public health administration, women were not only better suited than men, but in many cases they were the only persons qualified to carry on the work. The House of Commons had decided that women should not be dragged through the turmoil of a political struggle, but by being deprived of the right to be aldermen they were subjected to that turmoil. Women were already in the turmoil of political life. What was the Primrose League? Women were now used as the auxiliaries of men in political elections in a way that did them more harm than if they were on local vestries. At the last General Election

one would have thought that Battersea was the Court of King Arthur, and that he was Sir Galahad with all the noble dames anxious to help or oppose him. Women were useful to grind the axes of political mediocrities or to help titled nobodies to oust men who devoted their time and interests to municipal life; but when they asked that women should take their proper place in local municipal life they were told that they were degrading English womanhood. That was not true. The curse of English municipal life was that women did not take that interest in local life they ought, but if they were given an opportunity of voting for the ablest of their sisters their apathy and indifference would be broken down. Women had never been identified with jobbery or maladministration, and he asked the House of Commons, on behalf of hundreds of wealthy women with leisure, means, and inclination, who only wanted the opportunity to help their poorer sisters, to rise to its true level and to put underneath the young bloods who, to the permanent belittlement of women, wished to prevent them taking a part in local municipal life.

SIR E. CLARKE (Plymouth) said that, much as he regretted the difficulty the Committee had got into, he did not think that it had fairly exposed itself to the affronts offered to it by the honourable Member for Battersea, and he thought he would be showing more respect to the Committee if he left some of the honourable Member's observations absolutely without reference. But his right honourable Friend had made a much more serious and practical contribution to the discussion. He did not agree with him, however, that the Committee in the last two Divisions was unaware of the opinion it was expressing. He thought that the majority of the Committee was of opinion, and deliberately desired to express it, that municipal offices could not usefully be filled by women. He, for one, should be extremely glad if the Amendment were now withdrawn, and if the deliberate expression of the opinion of the Committee would be reserved until the Report stage, when there would be plenty of time to consider it. It was perfectly true that a very great deal of work in connection with the administration of affairs in London could best be done by women,

but the women who could do that work best and with most devotion and sincerity were precisely the women who would never stand as candidates at the elections, and who had no desire to hold official positions connected with administrative work. There was plenty of opportunity for all local bodies to obtain for themselves the loyal, self-sacrificing, and devoted work of women. They should lose nothing whatever by keeping to the opinion which he thought the majority of the Committee strongly entertained, namely, that it would be a great mistake to permit the candidature of women at municipal elections. He sincerely hoped the Amendment would be withdrawn in order that the matter might be considered on Report.

MR. HALDANE said that the honourable and learned Member for Plymouth had spoken in a very reasonable and temperate way in asking that the ultimate decision of the question should be deferred. He would, however, remind the Committee that there was much more in the Amendment than the mere question of transferring new powers to women. Clause 4 abolished vestries and district boards, but on those bodies women were doing, and had been doing for many years, most difficult work, and it appeared to him that if the Amendment were carried it would not only shut out women from the new councils, but would deprive them of the opportunity for work which they had exercised for the good of London. Women had a record of splendid work on school boards, vestries, and district boards, and they ought not to be deprived of the positions they at present occupied to the great advantage of their fellow citizens. He thought it would be well that this question should be reconsidered, and he entirely reciprocated the sentiment of the honourable and learned Member for Plymouth, that the Amendment should be withdrawn until the Report stage.

*MR. MARKS (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) said that the honourable Member for Battersea, in his extreme enthusiasm, had allowed himself to be carried away some considerable distance from the point. The honourable Member, he was sure unintentionally, misled the Committee with reference to the vote on the Amendment of the

honourable Member for West Marylebone. He said the Committee dealt with it almost unanimously, but it was carried only by a majority of 26. He also said that the vote was given under a misapprehension, but in his opinion the issue was perfectly well understood. It had been contended in the course of the Debate that the bodies which the Bill proposed to create should not be called boroughs. He quite admitted they should not be called boroughs unless they were going to be boroughs. If they were to be then the restrictions which applied to other similar bodies should also apply to them. In the provinces there were no lady mayors or lady aldermen or lady councillors. If they are given a constitution out of keeping with the existing boroughs there will be something more than a colour of foundation for the statement that they were never intended to be boroughs in fact, but were called by the name in order to conciliate a certain body of opinion, and to find a pill not otherwise easily swallowed.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: As I have already stated, on the question of substance the Government can give no guidance to the Committee, and I am not sure that the Committee is not all the better for it. On the question of form, I do not think there is anything to be gained by prolonging this discussion. It is clear, after the last Division, that the real decision on this subject cannot be arrived at at this stage, but must be reserved for the Report stage, because whatever the decision of the Committee on the Amendment now before us may be, it is impossible for the Bill to stand as it is, for the reason that it leaves the decision whether women can be aldermen to the decision of a court of law. Manifestly that cannot stand. If we mean to exclude women, we must definitely say that women are not to be mayors, or aldermen, or councillors, or we may say that women may be councillors but not aldermen or mayors, or that they may be councillors and aldermen but not mayors. Whatever we say, we must say distinctly, but by the last Division we have precluded ourselves from saying that on the Committee stage. It is obvious that with such a strong division of opinion the subject must come up again,

Mr. Marks.

and after the last Division any further discussion on this stage cannot be final or conclusive, and cannot even help to a final and conclusive decision on the next stage. I should, therefore, earnestly suggest to the Committee either that the Amendment should be withdrawn, or that we should now divide on it. Perhaps some honourable Gentleman may object to its being withdrawn, but let the Amendment be either withdrawn or let us divide, as it is clear that any further discussion is really only a waste of time.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I am not surprised that the right honourable Gentleman has risen, because the Committee finds itself in a position of considerable embarrassment and, indeed, bewilderment. We quite understand the reservation that the right honourable Gentleman makes on behalf of the Government as to the opinion of the Government on the merits of the question itself; but the right honourable Gentleman now proposes that we should not continue the discussion any longer, and that we should divide on the Amendment, or allow it to be withdrawn. I would venture to make a strong appeal to the Committee to follow the latter of these two alternatives. I think if we were to vote in our present frame of mind we should do so with the knowledge and intention that our decision would be reviewed and possibly reversed at a future stage. If it is the general opinion of the Committee that neither side to the controversy would accept a decision come to now as final and definitive, then it would be much more dignified and a much more reasonable course to allow this Amendment to be withdrawn, and that we should postpone the whole question, without committing ourselves one way or the other to a later stage. I venture to urge this on the Committee from the perfectly impartial position of one who, being somewhat astonished at the strange regions into which the discussion of the Amendment has drifted, has not taken part in any of the Debates.

Amendment, as amended, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

"In clause 2, page 1, line 28, to leave out 'an Order in Council under this Act,' and insert 'the London County Council.'"—(*Captain Norton.*)

CAPTAIN NORTON said that the greater part of the duties set forth in the section were now performed by the London County Council to the entire satisfaction of the areas concerned without friction of any kind. Moreover, those powers were inherited by the London County Council from the Metropolitan Board of Works, and the Council now objected to being deprived of those powers which they had successfully performed. The Council had put those powers into force in the City, and had reduced the wards in connection with the Board of Guardians from 94 to 50, with the entire concurrence of the Local Government Board, and with a general acknowledgment that it was a step in the right direction. The Council also acted at Clapham to the complete satisfaction of all concerned, and was in the habit of dealing with the various wards of outlying vestries. Surely there could be no body better suited for the work than the County Council, which consisted of elected representatives from every part of London. It was proposed in the Bill to substitute the Privy Council for the County Council, and he thought he was justified in asking what the Privy Council in that instance meant. He presumed it meant that a Committee of the Privy Council would appoint Commissioners to carry out the work. He thought they were entitled to know whom they were to be. Were they to be briefless barristers, roving from one part of London to another, or were they to act collectively. There would be no appeal from the decision of such Commissioners, though there would be an appeal from the County Council's decision to the Local Government Board.

Question put—

"That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

SIR R. FINLAY said that the Committee had already decided that the Committee of the Privy Council should determine the question of boundaries, and the proposal of the honourable and gallant Member was that when

the new boroughs were set up they should be divided into wards by another authority. He put it to the honourable and gallant Member that that was an extraordinary proposal to make. If the Committee left it to an Order in Council to fix the boroughs, they might surely leave it to the same authority to decide how the boroughs should be divided into wards. The Amendment could not possibly be accepted.

MR. BUXTON said there was a great deal of force in what fell from the Solicitor-General, but he thought there was some force also in the Amendment. When they came a little further on in the clause the Committee would then have an opportunity of discussing whether, where boundaries had to be altered, greater elasticity should not be given. He asked his honourable and gallant Friend not to press his Amendment now, but to move it later.

MR. LOUGH thought that the Solicitor-General did not entirely appreciate the argument of his honourable and gallant Friend. The Amendment did not really conflict with the original setting up of the boroughs by Order in Council. What the Amendment referred to was not the constitution of the boroughs, but that the internal arrangements should be left to some permanent authority familiar with local details. That was really the point in vogue. An Order in Council was very well to do definite work, but it did not continue in existence, and it would not be ready to adjust necessary internal boundaries.

LORD E. FITZMAURICE asked what was the intention of the Bill as it stood. The Committee decided, rightly or wrongly, that the Privy Council should have the fixing of the boundaries. He quite agreed that the authority which in the first instance fixed the boundaries should be allowed to settle the wards, but he could not make out from the Bill what was proposed with regard to any subsequent alteration that might be rendered necessary.

SIR R. FINLAY said he would be rather anticipating a discussion which would arise later by entering into that subject at present. The Amendment had reference to the best authority

for dealing with alterations after the boroughs had been constituted, and that would be a matter for subsequent consideration.

MR. ASQUITH: There is in the Bill no provision or machinery for subsequent alterations. I would, however, recommend my honourable and gallant Friend to withdraw his Amendment, but I reserve the right to make or support suggestions on the point later.

CAPTAIN NORTON said he withdrew his Amendment on the understanding that Amendments further down would not be prejudiced.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

" Clause 2, page 1, line 29, to leave out from 'wards' to 'and' in page 2, line 1, and insert 'each of which wards shall elect one councillor.'—(*Mr. H. Robertson.*)

MR. H. ROBERTSON said that the Amendment remedied two defects. He felt convinced that if the Government could see their way to divide the districts into single-member wards there would be much more interest in local elections, and each member would have a greater interest in the part of the constituency which he represented. The acceptance of the Amendment would also do away with the election of a third of the councillors every year, and would compel triennial elections. At present they had vestry elections, elections for guardians, elections for the school board, county council elections, and usually a Parliamentary election thrown in, and he was quite convinced that that was one of the reasons which prevented people taking an interest in them. He hoped the First Lord of the Treasury would see his way to have elections only once in three years. He also hoped that the number of councillors in each particular ward would be decreased.

SIR R. FINLAY said he did not propose to enter into the question as to whether elections should be held triennially or whether a third of the councillors should be elected every year, as that would be directly raised by another Amendment. The proposal in the Amendment was that each borough should be divided into as many wards as there were members of the council.

Sir R. Finlay.

Surely that was a startling proposal. If there were 50 or 60 councillors in a borough it meant that number of wards. He would suggest that the proper way to deal with the question was to leave it to be dealt with after local inquiry by an Order in Council.

MR. STUART said that in one of the boroughs which they were creating—Hampstead—there were 10,000 rated houses and 54 councillors, which gave a little over 200 rated houses to each member. In Chelsea there were 12,300 rated houses, which it would be found would give about 240 rated houses to each councillor. To have such a small electorate as that was not a reasonable or hopeful method of procedure.

Another Amendment proposed—

" In page 1, line 30, to leave out from the word 'ward' to the word 'regard' in page 2, line 1."—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton.*)

MR. BUXTON said that the object of the Amendment was to raise the question whether the whole of the members should go out triennially or only a third every year. It was not a Party question, or a question involving principle. It was purely a question as to the best method by which the municipalities could carry out their work efficiently. The proposal in the Bill was taken from the Municipal Corporations Act. Since that Act was passed there were other Acts passed in which the subject had been dealt with, and the tendency of the House of Commons since had been in the opposite direction. Under the Education Act of 1870 the whole of the members were to be elected for three years. In the Local Government Act of 1898 the House of Commons again decided that it would be better for the County Council to go out every three years instead of having annual elections. What was still more significant was that, under the Act of 1894, guardians were allowed the option of having annual or triennial elections, and he believed, at all events as regarded London, that every single board of guardians adopted the triennial system. Only the other day the House of Commons, without discussion or opposition, gave the same option. The honourable Member for Hackney had well pointed out that there were

too many elections in London, with the result that the amount of public interest shown in them was very small. The ratepayers no sooner got out of one election than they were in the midst of another, and the apathy manifested on the part of electors at election times could be traced to the multiplicity of elections. It was needful that some method should be devised to reduce their number. In 1894, for instance, there was a Parliamentary election, a school board election, a county council election, the guardians elections, and the vestry elections. He was aware that the arguments used in favour of the present system was that it conducted to continuity of policy, but this continuity of policy not infrequently meant opportunities for jobbery. The ratepayers should have the opportunity to reverse this continuity of policy on occasion. If honourable Members would take the trouble to read the Debates which took place on the County Council Act of 1888, they would there find that the arguments used by the Government in favour of aldermen was that by their appointment continuity of policy would be secured. Everyone would admit that in the majority of local bodies there was always a sufficient number of the older members left after the election to carry on that continuity of policy which was to the advantage of the locality. Moreover, the existence of aldermen would secure sufficient continuity. It had been estimated that the official expenses in connection with the whole of the elections would be something between £10,000 and £15,000. The probabilities were that it would be considerably larger, and in addition there were, of course, the expenses of the candidates themselves. On the ground, therefore, of the saving of cost, both to the rates and to the candidates, he submitted that triennial elections would be an improvement. In moving his Amendment he trusted the Government would treat this as a non-Party question.

*MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea) opposed the Amendment, but with diffidence, as he felt that it raised a question which it was very difficult to come to a conclusive opinion upon. He admitted the strength of the arguments in favour of triennial elections. He could not con-

trovert those arguments, but there were other arguments which, he submitted, in their combined weight rather told in favour of annual elections. If the County Council election took place each year they might get a smaller number of electors to come to the poll, but they would not get a smaller number of electors who were interested in the questions involved. For one thing, if they had a triennial election there was great temptation to make it a means for political propaganda on both sides, and for political agencies to bring their forces to bear and to raise larger issues than ought to be voted upon at these local elections. Again, suppose there was some great wave of popular feeling on one particular question. Surely it would be a pity to get rid of the whole body on account of it. It would be better that in each year any particular subject should be discussed and its value gauged, and that only one-third of the body should be affected by the discussion. The result of triennial elections in the selection of aldermen was another important consideration. There would be much more probability of their being chosen for Party reasons. Triennial elections would give a great impetus to outside agencies and political cries and discourage the quiet men from standing. The County Council election had already become practically a political one, and he did not want the political element to be imported into the elections for the municipal councils. No doubt if the elections were triennial a larger number of voters would be got to the polls, but they would not be got there by legitimate means or for proper purposes, and in that way great damage would be done to that which they all should have at heart—namely, the return of the best men, irrespective of Party politics.

MR. BANBURY said he could not agree with his honourable Friend who had just spoken. He supposed the object both sides had at heart was to promote local feeling, and the question was, what was the best way of doing it? London was at present overwhelmed with elections, and when a voter was asked to go to the poll he invariably replied, "I have no time; I am always voting." By annual elections the apathy of the electors would be perpetuated, but

with triennial elections there would be some chance of getting them to take an interest in local matters. There would be no difference in electioneering motives if the elections were triennial. In the majority of the constituencies the annual elections were always governed by politics.

LORD E. FITZMAURICE reminded the Committee of the discussions upon this point in connection with the Bill of 1894. That Bill went backwards and forwards several times between that House and another place, and the arguments in favour of the retirement of all the members of a council after three years were felt to be so strong that a compromise was accepted, and power was given to the councils to decide the point themselves. In the county with whose administration he was connected—Wiltshire—every rural council had adopted the privilege given to them, and they did so at once, and with practical unanimity. He believed that very largely the same state of things prevailed in other counties. That, surely, was a strong proof that retirement of the whole body of members every third year was an exceedingly popular and democratic measure. A good deal had been said about continuity, but the whole argument on that point told in favour of the Amendment. Anyone who had to do with the administration of affairs in rural and urban districts would agree with him that when one-third of the body retired every year they always had the terror of the November election dangled before them, and large and absolutely necessary schemes for the benefit of the locality were constantly liable to be wrecked owing to the enormous temptation to postpone them until after the election; whereas, if the election was triennial—he wished it could be for five years—the candidates would be able to put a policy before the whole of the electors, and, if returned, carry out that policy without obstruction and opposition. The argument with regard to the cost of the elections was also an important one. It cost almost as much to return one-third of the members as it did to return the whole body. The urban council of which he was a member, by the adoption of triennial elections, had

saved the ratepayers a sum equal to a rate of a halfpenny in the £. He thought all the arguments were in favour of his honourable Friend's Amendment.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I have listened with astonishment to the speech just delivered. The noble Lord says that under the Bill we are going to make an appeal every year to the electors, and he asks us to think what the result will be. The result will be that the electors will have an opportunity of criticising and pronouncing upon the policy of the local authority once a year, and he complains of that.

LORD E. FITZMAURICE: No.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: Then what on earth does the noble Lord mean by popular local government?

LORD E. FITZMAURICE: Is this House elected every year?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: No, it is not, but I understand a great many honourable Members opposite are in favour of its being elected every year. It does seem to me a most striking contention on the part of the noble Lord that this proposal is to be rejected because it gives the people an opportunity of pronouncing upon the work of the local authority once in a year. There are two other objections made against the proposal, but, having regard to the experience of town councils in the provinces, I cannot see any ground for them. I deny that it would be possible, as suggested, to make a clean sweep of a council. The utmost you can hope to do is to change two or three places. It leaves open the possibility of continuity, but there is not the temptation to those politicians who regard local government as purely a sphere for political operations. The present system has been in operation for 60 years, and I do not believe there is anyone connected with municipal government who wishes to change it. With regard to the cost, you would have fewer

contests under the system of annual elections than under the system of triennial elections, when every seat would probably be contested. Speaking from some provincial experience, I do not believe there is anyone who would wish to change for the system proposed by the honourable Gentleman opposite.

*MR. McKENNA said he had been consulting the opinions of great men who had spoken on this subject in former times, and amongst others he had turned to the right honourable Gentleman who had just sat down. He found that in 1888 the Secretary for the Colonies had thus expressed himself—

“The experience of the United States showed that when the people were constantly being called upon to vote at elections, the whole matter fell into the hands of caucuses and machine politicians, a state of things which had never happened in this country, and which he, for one, would extremely deprecate.”

The experience of the right honourable Gentleman on matters of local government was more recent in 1888 than it was to-day, and he should therefore prefer to accept the opinion of 1888 rather than the directly contrary one which had just been expressed.

CAPTAIN JESSEL (St. Pancras, S.) said it was possible that if the elections were triennial more people would take an interest in them. The Local Government Act of 1894 gave boards of guardians the option of deciding whether their elections should be annual or triennial, and every board of guardians in London decided in favour of triennial elections. It had been decided by the Committee to have aldermen, and he thought the mere fact of aldermen being on the boards would ensure continuity of policy. He could not conceive any circumstance by which every old member of a board would be defeated at the election. It was certain that, if not a majority, at any rate a great many of them would be re-elected. It could not be denied that all the municipal elections in London were fought on political lines,

and he did not see how they could be more political if held every three years than they were now. He hoped the Government would accept the Amendment, or allow the district boards of the new boroughs the option of choosing for themselves.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again.”—(*Mr. James Stuart.*)

Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

On the Order for the adjourned Debate on the Second Reading of this Bill,

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) asked whether the Government intended to make any progress with the Bill or not, for it had now appeared on the Order Paper for many weeks.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanark, Mid): Will it be taken before Whitsuntide?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: My learned Friend the Attorney-General is anxious that it should be taken as soon as possible. But I cannot give a definite answer on a matter to which I have given little attention myself.

ECCLESIASTICAL ASSESSMENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLAUSE 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday 14th June.

BUSINESS DEFERRED.**OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.**

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading
[22nd March] further adjourned till
Thursday 11th May.

**UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACTS
AMENDMENT BILL.**

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading
[9th March] further adjourned till Mon-
day next.

FINANCE BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday
next.

COLONIAL LOANS FUND BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday
next.

**INEBRIATES ACT (1898) AMENDMENT
BILL.**

Second Reading deferred till Monday
next.

IMPROVEMENT OF LAND BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday
next.

CHARITABLE LOANS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday
next.

**PALATINE COURT OF DURHAM BILL
[H.L.]**

Second Reading deferred till Monday
next.

SOLICITORS BILL [H.L.]

Read a second time, and committed
for Monday next.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING (CLAUSES) BILL

Second Reading deferred till Monday
next.

FARNLEY TYAS MARRIAGES BILL.

Read a second time, and committed
for Monday next.

**TELEGRAPH (CHANNEL ISLANDS) BILL
[H.L.]**

Second Reading deferred till Monday
next.

**PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE
(SCOTLAND) BILL.**

Committee deferred till Monday next.

SUPREME COURT (APPEALS) BILL [H.L.]

Read a second time, and committed
for Monday next.

PENSIONS (OLD-AGE) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday
11th May.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS (No. 2) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday
11th May.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS (No. 3) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday
11th May.

**OLD-AGE PENSIONS (FRIENDLY
SOCIETIES) BILL.**

Second Reading deferred till Thursday
11th May.

**TANCRED'S CHARITIES SCHEME CON-
FIRMATION BILL.**

Second Reading deferred till Monday
next.

LIMITATIONS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thurs-
day next.

PARLIAMENTARY DEPOSITS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thurs-
day next.

House adjourned at five minutes
after Twelve of the clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 28th April 1899.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat upon the Woolsack at Four of the clock.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND.

Earl of CLONMELL—Lord CLARINA.

Reports made from the Lord Chancellor, That the right of Rupert Charles Earl of Clonmell, and Lionel Edward Baron Clarina, to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of the Lord Chancellor; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

PEER SAT FIRST.

The Lord Hillingdon—Sat first in Parliament after the death of his father.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for additional provision in the Workington Corporation Water Bill [H.L.]

ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to the Committee on the Bill to insert the additional provision:

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for additional provision in the Portsmouth Corporation Bill [H.L.]

ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to the Committee on the Bill to insert the additional provision:

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Metropolitan Water Companies Bill ought to be dispensed with:

Read, and agreed to.

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YORKE ESTATE BILL [H.L.]

Judges' Report received: Bill presented, and read the first time.

MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR BOARD (PILOTAGE) BILL [H.L.]

Committee (which stands appointed for Monday next) put off to Thursday next.

ILFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL (RATES) BILL.

Committee to meet on Monday next.

MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR BOARD (FINANCE) BILL [H.L.]

Committee to meet on Thursday next.

CLAY CROSS WATER BILL.

Committee to meet on Tuesday next.

CLYDE NAVIGATION BILL [H.L.]

The Queen's Consent signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee with amendments.

TOTLAND WATER BILL [H.L.]

Reported with amendments.

RAWTENSTALL CORPORATION WATER BILL [H.L.]

BURY CORPORATION WATER BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Earl of Dundonald be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee in the place of the Lord Kinnaird; read, and agreed to.

GLASGOW AND SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]

CALEDONIAN RAILWAY (GENERAL POWERS) BILL [H.L.]

PAISLEY AND BARRHEAD DISTRICT RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee adjourned this day at half-past Twelve o'clock, and pray leave not to sit again until Wednesday next at Twelve o'clock; read, and leave given.

NOTTINGHAM CORPORATION BILL.

Read a second time, and committed :
The Committee to be proposed by the
Committee of Selection.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (ABERAVON, Etc.) BILL [H.L.]

Committed to a Committee of the
Whole House on Tuesday next.

BROUGHTY FERRY GAS AND PAVING ORDER BILL [H.L.]

House to be in Committee on Monday
next.

BARTON-ON-SEA WATER BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Select Committee
with Amendments.

SOUTH HANTS WATER BILL [H.L.]

The Queen's Consent signified ; and
Bill reported specially from the Select
Committee with amendments. (Costs
awarded to two Petitioners.)

GLASGOW AND SOUTH-WESTERN RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]**PAISLEY AND BARRHEAD DISTRICT RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]****CALEDONIAN RAILWAY (GENERAL POWERS) BILL [H.L.]**

Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Barnard be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Methuen ; read, and agreed to.

PETITIONS.**MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (BOROUGH FUNDS) ACT, 1872.**

Petition for Amendment of ; of Littleborough Urban District Council ; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

TITHE RENT-CHARGES.

Petition for redress of grievances ; of Incumbents of Parishes in the Rural Deanery of the Diocese of Worcester ; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.**EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).**

Scotch code of regulations for evening continuation schools ; 1899.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

EVICCTIONS (IRELAND).

Return for the quarter ended 31st March 1899.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SUPERANNUATION.

Treasury Minute, dated 21st April 1899, declaring that David Pollock, rural postman, Post Office Department, Ardrossan, was appointed without a civil service certificate through inadvertence on the part of the head of his department.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1883 (PROCEEDINGS).

Account showing the receipts and expenditure on account of bankruptcy proceedings during the year ended 31st March 1899.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

COMPANIES WINDING-UP ACT, 1890.

Accounts showing receipts and expenditure on account of proceedings under the Companies Winding-up Act, 1890, during the year ended 31st March 1899.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

METROPOLITAN POLICE AND POLICE COURTS (ACCOUNTS).

Accounts showing the sums received and expended for the purposes of the Metropolitan Police, Police Pension Fund, and Metropolitan Police Courts, during the year ended 31st March 1899.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

FEE FUND OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid on the Table the Annual Account of the Fee Fund of the House of Lords; the same was ordered to lie on the Table, and to be referred to the Select Committee on the House of Lords Offices.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

METROPOLITAN WATER COMPANIES BILL.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That this Bill be read a second time."—
(*Lord James of Hereford.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Lord JAMES of HEREFORD); My Lords, the Bill which I now ask your Lordships to read a second time is one of not very general applicability, but it is one of considerable utility. Its general object is to enable the different water companies that exist in London to connect up with each other, so that in case of deficiency in the supply of one company, the over-abundant water of the other may be conveyed into the area supplied by the deficient company. That is the general purpose of the Bill, but its immediate necessity and urgency result from the deficient supply, especially of last year, of the East London Water Company. Your Lordships, of course, are aware that for 16 weeks this company was unable to fulfil its obligation to maintain a constant supply of water, and great inconvenience was caused thereby. Such a state of things ought not to be tolerated in the metropolis if it can possibly be avoided, and it can be avoided. To a certain extent, the inconvenience was mitigated by the efforts of the New River Company, and the Southwark and Vauxhall Company, which supplied between them about 11 million gallons of water per day to East London. But that was not enough, and, as I have said, for 16 weeks a constant supply was not afforded to the consumers

within the East London Company's area. The object of this Bill, whilst, of course, it is general in its terms, is to prevent a recurrence of such an incident, and it is proposed to give the Local Government Board power to call upon the different companies to effect works of intercommunication. The companies will now have the obligation cast upon them of giving the necessary assistance in cases of emergency to prevent a deficiency in the water supply occurring in the future. I am sure the general principle of the Bill must meet with the approbation of your Lordships, although there were those in the House of Commons who felt it to be their duty to prevent the new powers being granted under the present conditions of the water controversy to the existing companies. This Bill was, however, permitted to be read a second time without a Division being taken upon it. Having stated the general object of the Measure, I do not intend to enter into any discussion of the details, because I do not think, in the first place, that those detailed provisions do more than necessarily carry out the object of the Bill, and because from the nature of the Bill it is somewhat peculiar in its construction. The Bill will go to a Select Committee, because it takes powers which affect private property. This Bill was referred to the Hybrid Committee by the House of Commons, where a variety of interests appeared by counsel and discussed the details of the Bill. The details in the Bill now before your Lordships are those as framed by the Committee of the House of Commons. So far as the principle of the Bill is concerned, the Government are carrying out the suggestion made by the Royal Commission, presided over by Lord Llandaff, in their interim report. As this Bill must go to a Select Committee, where all those who are interested can appear by counsel, state their case and give evidence, I do not intend at this stage to enter upon any question of detail. Of course, if your Lordships think it right to touch upon any matter of detail, I will endeavour to give an explanation in my reply.

LORD TWEEDMOUTH said his noble Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy, in commending this Bill to their Lordships, had rested his case largely upon the old

classic grounds that the Bill was such a small one. The noble Lord also said the Bill would go to a Select Committee. He was glad to hear those announcements from the noble Lord. He agreed with the principle, at any rate, of the Bill, but had some criticism to make. The noble Lord said this Measure was only in the nature of a palliative remedy, and that it was not intended to be any settlement of the great controversial questions of the water supply of London. He agreed that the palliative measures necessary could be effected by means of a very small Bill, but this was not a very small Bill. So far from being confined to the objects stated by the noble Lord opposite, the Bill contained powers of a much wider character, which, if purchase were not effected in the next seven years, amounted almost to a scheme for the amalgamation of the eight metropolitan water companies. There were three special points to which he would direct their Lordships' attention with regard to the provisions of this Bill. First of all there was a want of limitation as to the class of works to be executed under the Bill, a want of limitation with regard to the amount of capital to be raised under it, and a want of limitation as to the time which the Bill was to be operative. Then, too, there was transferred to the Local Government Board, for the purpose of the Bill, the power to decide how much capital was to be issued by these companies, instead of leaving it, as had always been the case, to Parliament; and, further, the Bill was a departure from all recent Parliamentary practice with regard to the issue of new capital by water companies, inasmuch as the new capital was not to be subjected to any charge for a sinking fund. The only limitation he could find in the Bill was in paragraph A of the first clause, but it was possible under that clause for the companies to submit schemes for any works for the supply of water so long as they did not go to a new source for that supply. Under clause 3, unless the undertaking of the company was purchased within seven years of the passing of this Bill, any capital raised under the Bill could be added to the capital which would have had to be taken into consideration in the case of any future purchase. It was rash to assume that a Measure for the purchase

of the London water companies would be got through all its stages and receive the Royal Assent in seven years, and, therefore, he contended that the proposal in the Bill was a departure from all recent Parliamentary practice, because it had been the evident intention of Parliament, both in that House and in the House of Commons, that no new issues of capital by the water companies should be treated as part and parcel of any additional sum to be paid by the community when purchase was effected. The usual practice had been that when a water company required new capital it applied to Parliament for powers to issue a definite sum; but in this Bill there is no reference at all to the fixing of a definite sum. The amount of new capital which any company would be allowed to issue under this Bill was left to the arbitration of the Local Government Board, and this was, in his opinion, a most extraordinary innovation. The Bill would give the companies power, with the sanction of the Local Government Board, to issue £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 worth of new capital without applying to Parliament at all. Three schemes were put before the Royal Committee for effecting this intercommunication between the eight companies. The Royal Commission expressed the opinion that scheme No. 3, which was estimated to cost £64,000, would, if carried out, afford the necessary measure of aid to the East London Water Company in the event of a recurrence of drought; but they were satisfied that further consideration would probably result in the elaboration of some better arrangement for obtaining the object in view. There was not much doubt but that the scheme would cost £100,000, and he held that this was a sufficient amount to warrant the sanction of Parliament being necessary. If the amount was limited to £100,000 they might look with greater complacency on the proposal. With regard to the absence of any limitation of time, it would only have been reasonable, as this was avowedly a Measure meant to remove a temporary difficulty, to include in it a time to which the operation of the Bill should be limited. To leave to the Local Government Board the power of deciding both as to the works which were to be carried out by new capital under the Bill and to decide as to the

amount of new capital to be raised by the several companies was, he ventured to say, an innovation. This was a subject which had up to the present been left to the decision of Parliament, and he regretted that for the purpose of this Bill the power was to be transferred from Parliament to the Local Government Board. Again, the proposal that the capital to be issued under the Bill should not be subjected to any charge for a sinking fund was a departure from all recent Parliamentary practice. Ever since 1886, Committee after Committee of both Houses had, in all cases where power to issue new capital was granted to the water companies, insisted that the whole of the new capital should be subject for a charge for a sinking fund. It had evidently been the intention of Parliament that in the case of new issues of capital by the water companies they should not be allowed to make commercial profit out of such new issues, and that whatever commercial profit was gained from them should be put into a fund for the general benefit of the water consumer. The Controller of the Finance Department of the London County Council had calculated what the amount of the sinking fund was at the present time, and what it was likely to be. At the present moment it was not much, having only been in operation since 1886; but the Controller of the Finance Department of the County Council stated that up to the end of 1897 the amount of authorised capital now subjected to the sinking fund was £6,320,000. He estimated that when the sinking fund arrangements operated in full, say in 1915, the annual instalments paid to the fund would amount to £120,000 a year. The fund at present was not large, as only a small portion of the capital had come under its operation; but it would grow, and was estimated to amount to £1,780,000 in 1915, and to upwards of £5,000,000 in 1930. It was argued, he believed, that in the case of the capital under this Bill it would not be right to subject it to the charge for a sinking fund, because the capital would not be a profit-earning capital. But who was to decide, in taking the capital of great concerns like these, what part was profit-earning and what was not? It seemed to him an extraordinary thing that, after 13 successive years, during which Parliament had imposed this con-

dition on the new issue of capital by these companies, Her Majesty's Government should come forward in the 14th year—he supposed they had caught the infection from the Chancellor of the Exchequer—and propose to make a raid on the sinking fund which had been established for the benefit of the water consumers of London. There were other points with regard to this Bill which he would not do more than just touch upon. There was the question of how far it was just that the water consumers in a particular district, who took water from a company at a low rate, should be obliged to pay a higher rate for water supplied under the provisions of this Bill by another company. He hoped the matter to which he had referred would receive the very careful consideration not only of the Committee to which the Bill was to be sent, but of their Lordships' House. He did not dispute the wisdom of the decision arrived at by the Government, that the whole of the London Water question should be sent to a Royal Commission; but he would point out that those who thought fresh sources of water should be acquired, or that purchase should be adopted with regard to the present companies, were required to hold their own hands until after the Report of the Royal Commission. That being so, he thought it was only fair that equal justice should be meted out to all, that the Government should hold a perfectly equal balance between the two parties in this question, and not by any accident in the provisions of the present Bill give an advantage, as he held this Bill clearly did, to the one side—namely, to the water companies.

EARL COWPER said everyone must be glad Her Majesty's Government had taken up this subject without delay. He did not rise in any way to oppose the Bill, but to call attention to one particular section which would, he thought, have an effect not intended by its introducers. He referred to the second section of the first clause. He had been informed on good legal authority that this section gave considerably more power than was necessary for the purposes of the Bill. He believed the section was intended merely to give the companies who were ordered by the Local Government Board to supply

water to other districts in times of necessity the power of connecting their mains with those of other companies; but it seemed to him to go further than that, and to give them power to sink wells, to construct works, and take water outside their own districts altogether. In Hertfordshire fears were widespread among the people that the water companies could, under this Bill, buy lands in the county, sink wells, and drain the watershed of the district. He would be very sorry to put any obstacle in the way of a Bill which was intended to remedy distress caused by an insufficient supply of water in the poorer districts of London, but he trusted he would get a satisfactory declaration from the Government that the injustice to which he had referred was not possible under the Bill.

*THE EARL OF VERULAM endorsed every word uttered by the noble Lord who had just spoken, and said that in Hertfordshire the flow of the streams in his neighbourhood had seriously decreased during the last few years. Anyone seeing the lines of farmers' carts fetching water from the rivers would realise that this was a real danger. He trusted the noble Lord in charge of the Bill would rectify in Committee any mistake made in the drafting, in order to protect Hertfordshire from the danger to which the noble Lord had referred.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Lord JAMES OF HEREFORD): I am glad to be able to assure the noble Earl and the noble Lord who has just spoken that the fears of the people of Hertfordshire are groundless. I do not quite appreciate myself how any anxiety could have arisen, for I can find nothing in the Bill which would give powers to any water company to tap any fresh source of water supply. I have consulted the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, and they are equally clear that there is no power under this Bill to take any water from Hertfordshire, or from any other source that is not now drawn upon under existing powers. Hertfordshire may be quite sure, therefore, that, so far as the Law Officers can see, there is no risk whatever of the danger to which the noble Earl alluded. It may be necessary to lay down a main or pipe, but that will be, if I may use the term, a per-

fectly dry operation, and simply for the purpose of connecting the mains of one company with the mains of the other company supplying the area in which there is a deficiency. I do not think the representatives of Hertfordshire would object to the soil being broken for the purpose of laying a pipe if they have a guarantee that no water shall be taken. It is our intention that no water shall be taken from any area in or out of the metropolitan water area which cannot be taken now, and provision shall be made to make it certain that neither Hertfordshire nor any other county outside the area can be in any way affected by the powers of this Bill coming into operation. I will not follow my noble Friend with regard to the details of the Bill. I look forward with some apprehension that it is possible that I may have to take part in the proceedings of the Select Committee, and it is possible that my noble Friend will also take part in those proceedings. We shall then sit judicially, and if we enter into a Debate here upon the details of the Bill it may be supposed that we had prejudged the various questions that will be raised before us. I feel tempted to reply to the noble Lord, but for the reason I have given I do not think it will be well to do so. My noble Friend's principal argument was that there ought not to have been a clause prohibiting the sinking fund, and my noble Friend suggested that we had been inspired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. As a matter of fact we were inspired by the Royal Commission, who recommended that as the money raised under this Bill would not yield revenue to the companies they should be exempt from the obligation of the sinking fund clause. I agree that if they are to get no remuneration we should not make them contribute towards a sinking fund when they have no profit out of which to contribute. You are here dealing with money compulsorily expended for the purpose of humanity, and to prevent the recurrence of the state of things which existed in East London last summer, when the district supplied by the East London Water Company was 16 weeks without a constant supply. This is an emergency Bill, and it has been thought that a safer and a better plan would be to leave the working of it to a Government Department. It is impossible to define the exact works to be

carried out, and no general scheme can be laid down. In the same way, what can be the utility of limiting the expenditure? The Local Government Board will see that it is as little as possible, and the companies will have nothing to gain by spending money in this direction. They will, of course, wish it to be as little as possible, but no one can foresee what may be the expenditure required. We have thought that in this matter the Local Government Board may safely be trusted to look after the public interests. I agree with my noble Friend in saying that this is not a Party question. One Party may be in the Local Government Board to-day and another to-morrow. Surely we may trust our public men to perform their duty to their fellow citizens, and surely it is better to give discretion to a public body rather than to fix specific limits that may be unsuitable to the condition of affairs that may arise. All the points that my noble Friend has raised can be discussed in the Select Committee, and in the Committee of this House. The details of this Measure are so framed that a great public good will be accomplished.

Question put.

Bill read a second time and committed, the Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS IN CHURCHES BILL.

House in Committee.

Bill reported without Amendment, and recommitted to the Standing Committee.

COPYRIGHT (ARTISTIC) BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That this Bill be read a second time."—
(*Lord Monckswell.*)

***LORD MONCKSWELL** said that this Bill and the Literary Copyright Bill, the Second Reading of which their Lordships had already passed, entirely covered the ground taken by Lord Herschell's consolidating Measure of last Session. This Bill came before their Lordships' House with very great authority. It had the

earnest support of the whole body of the Royal Academy, and also of numerous other bodies of great eminence interested in artistic work. In 1879, soon after the Report of the Royal Commission was issued, the Royal Academy issued a manifesto on the subject of artistic copyright and, in the main, this Bill was based upon the contentions that were put forward in this manifesto. Changes had, however, been made in order to safeguard the owners of pictures and to provide that the copyright of the artist should be subject to such conditions that it could never possibly be a grievance to the owners of pictures. The Bill was also largely based on the recommendations of the Royal Commission, though in one important particular it went contrary to those recommendations. The first clause in the Bill was of considerable importance, because it gave to American artists the same rights that English artists had in America. Under the present law English artists who produced and published works in America had the copyright in America, although they were not resident there, but an American artist who wanted to get a copyright here had to be resident in Her Majesty's dominions. This clause proposed to give a copyright for works of art made by any person in America provided only they were registered in England. The term of copyright for original artistic work would be the same as that proposed in the Literary Bill for literary copyright—namely, a life and 30 years. In the case of a work of fine art, made by one person from the design of another, of a cast from nature, and of a photograph the term of the copyright would be 30 years. The Bill further proposed to extend artistic copyright so as to make it perfectly clear that to imitate one form of art by another was an infringement of copyright. This was a provision on which artists laid great stress, and it was recommended by the Royal Commission. With regard to registration, the law at present was that an artistic work might be registered at any time, but it was impossible to sue without registration, or in respect of anything done previous to registration. The Bill proposed that registration should be required only on the assignment of copyright from the original author of the work. While the artist retained the copyright he had power to

law without registration. The registration law was made more stringent than it was at present. In future, the registration of artistic copyright must take place within six months after it had been acquired, or such time as a judge may deem reasonable. Failure to get the copyright registered within that time would involve the absolute forfeiture of the copyright. The Bill also gave power to search for and to seize unlawful copies in houses or shops, and to seize unlawful copies hawked about the country. He now came to the part of the Bill which the artistic world deemed to be of supreme importance, and it was a matter upon which the Royal Commission was almost equally divided. By a majority of one, he believed, the Commission decided to confer the copyright of a work of art, in the absence of any agreement, on the buyer of the work. The law at present in force, and which had been in force for 37 years, was that when an artist sold a work of art, as he nearly always did, without any stipulation as to copyright, that copyright ceased to belong to the artist, but it did not belong to the purchaser. That was to say, it lapsed altogether, and anyone who could get a sight of the picture was at liberty to reproduce it to his heart's content and to the replenishment of his pocket. A counter proposal, that in the absence of any agreement the copyright should belong to the artist and not to the buyer, was unanimously adopted by the artists. The Royal Academy, in their manifesto, strongly combated the conclusion at which the Commission had arrived, and complained with not unnatural warmth that, while several literary men were included in the Commission, not a single artist sat on it. It was reasonable to suppose that if an artist of eminence had sat on the Commission his arguments might have turned some votes in a direction contrary to the decision of the Commission. During the last 20 years events had happened that had greatly strengthened the cause of the artists. The experience of 37 years conclusively showed that this matter was one of great importance to artists and to art, and it ought to be settled one way or the other by law. The change proposed by the Commission would make bargains infinitely more difficult on the part of artists than at present, because the

artist would then have to bargain to retain something the law gave to the purchaser. The artists wished to retain the copyright, not only because it was a question of money, but chiefly in order to prevent bad reproductions of their pictures. The experience of the last 20 years had shown that cheap and common reproductions were calculated absolutely to stop high-class reproductions, and without this protection of copyright high-class reproductions would cease to be made. Very few artists made money out of their copyright, but they were able to insist, in the cause of art, upon the reproductions being creditable reproductions. The purchaser, if the provisions of this Bill were carried, would lose nothing. The reservation of the right of the artist was safeguarded as to make very little difference to the purchaser. The purchaser would get what he got now; the difference was that a right which everybody thought ought to exist would continue to exist. It was said that the purchaser ought to get the copyright; but did the ordinary purchaser want copyright? The ordinary purchaser bought a picture in the first place to look at it; secondly, to show it to his friends; and, thirdly, to talk about it. The ordinary purchaser did not get copyright now, and he had never heard that there had been any agitation to give it to him. He had spoken of the ordinary purchaser, but no doubt there were other purchasers who thought a great deal about copyright. There were the engravers, photographers, and others, who naturally always bargained for copyright. The artists proposed to subject their copyright to reasonable restriction in the interests of these purchasers, but they suggested that no replica should be made of any picture likely to be confounded with the original picture, and it was proposed that the artist should not be allowed to exhibit a replica that was made before the picture was bought. As to portraits, the owner would continue to enjoy practically the same protection that the law now gave. The artist would hold his copyright subject entirely to the good will and pleasure of the owner of the portrait; what he got was only the control over any reproduction that might be authorised by the owner of the portrait. An eminent Royal Academician told him two or three years ago that he

never made a sixpence by the copyright of his pictures, whilst he had devoted an enormous amount of time and attention to giving advice as to the best method of reproduction. It seemed clear that in the interests of art artists should have as far as possible the copyright. He hoped the House would endorse the unanimous opinion of the artists and send the Bill to the Select Committee that had been appointed to consider the Literary Copyright Bill. They would, in course of time, have the views of that Committee before them, which would guide them in their ultimate decision. But he thought it his duty, in justice to the Royal Academy and to art in general, to lay before the House the nature of the grievance under which the artists considered they suffered, and the remedies they proposed. He felt a peculiar pleasure in being permitted to champion the cause of art, inasmuch as many members of his family had been imbued by a keen love of art, and some of them had been proficient in the practice of it.

Question put.

Bill read a second time, and referred to the Select Committee.

THE CROMWELL STATUE.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS asked whether Her Majesty's Government would cause a rough model of the proposed statue of Cromwell, and the pedestal, to be put up, actual size, on the selected site. He pointed out that the height of the statue, with the pedestal, would be 33ft., and inasmuch as the statue of Lord Beaconsfield, close by, was, with the pedestal, only 20ft. high, and the statues of Lord Palmerston and Sir Robert Peel a little less, there would be a great want of proportion between these three statues and the proposed statue to Cromwell. The monument would also, he thought, impair the architectural effect of Westminster Hall. In view of these considerations he urged the adoption of the practice in vogue in France and America, a practice which had recently been adopted in this country in the case of the Boadicea monument—namely, that a model should be erected in the first instance, in order that the public might

judge of the artistic effect of a monument before they were finally committed to it. He had no objection to the site if the statue was not too big, but he thought the public ought to have the opportunity of seeing it in rough model before it was finally placed up. He would give the House a case in point. The Committee appointed for the erection of a monument to Sir John Millais, of which he (the Earl of Wemyss) was a member, decided that the statue should be placed at the Tate Gallery, and a question arose as to whether it should be placed inside or outside the Gallery. It was agreed that the statue should be erected outside, and two places were suggested, one being a position half way up the steps going into the Gallery, and the other in the garden. As the Committee could not come to any decision as to which site should be selected, they caused rough models to be made and put up on both sites. When this was done the Committee saw at once that if the statue were erected on the steps it would spoil the building, and eventually the statue was placed in the garden, but the pedestal and statue were reduced in height. He hoped the Government would favourably consider the matter to which he had called attention.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): I am afraid it is not part of my functions to administer consolation to the wounded artistic feelings of the noble Lord.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS: They are not wounded.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS: Well, they appeared to be, judging by the energy which he brought into his complaint. The noble Earl is aware this is a public monument in a very peculiar position. It was originally intended, I believe, to be erected by the agency and at the cost of Her Majesty's Government in the time of the noble Lords opposite, but out of deference to the patriotic feelings of the Irish Members it was found necessary to abandon that scheme, and instead of that the Government summoned from the "vast

deep" some mysterious donor who was content to take upon himself a responsibility from which they shrank, and who was not afraid of the wrath of the Irish Members. I am told that he has been the cause of the production of a fine work of art by Mr. Thorneycroft, but I do not see exactly how the Government can gratify the wish of my noble Friend. There is a proverb, "You must not look a gift horse in the mouth," but my noble Friend wants to look the gift horse all over, not in the mouth only, and to put it through certain evolutions and operations in order to satisfy himself—

THE EARL OF WEMYSS: Satisfy the public.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS: Of course, people always think of the public first—to satisfy the public and himself that it is in its general character suitable to the site it is to occupy. But we are not at liberty to do so; it is not our statue. The noble Lord must go to his conjurer the wise woman again to find out the mysterious donor and ask from him permission to do what he proposes. I do not venture to prophesy whether that permission will be obtained. There is no doubt something attractive and plausible in the suggestion that before anything in the artistic or architectural way is erected in this metropolis a model of it should be offered for the criticism of the public and the noble Lord; but I have doubts whether this would tend to a satisfactory conclusion. I have an impression that in art, as in diplomacy, it is better to trust to the *fait accompli*, and when the statue is once put up, one school of critics, at all events, will accept it with great enthusiasm and another will submit to it with great resignation. But if you put it up to be examined six months before, critics will have left nothing of the statue by the time their work is finished. These are only my own humble and personal criticisms on the suggestion of my noble Friend. My official answer to the question is, we cannot promise to do as he wishes because the statue, or rather the model, is not ours so to deal with, and until

The Prime Minister.

the noble Lord has procured us that permission we cannot further consider his suggestion.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS said he was sorry he could not accept this as a reasonable answer. The name of the donor could surely be obtained from the sculptor, and, in fact, the name was known. The Government were not powerless; the Board of Works claimed and exercised full authority in such matters. A man could not even measure Lord Beaconsfield's statue without permission from the Board of Works—nothing could be done without the permission of the Board of Works—and who were the Board of Works but the noble Marquess and the Government! The Government would be neglecting their duty to London if they did not take every possible means before the erection of the statue to have the general effect shown. The Government or the Board of Works surely would not accept any work of the kind offered.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS: My noble Friend says I am saying the Government are bound to accept anything anybody proposes to offer.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS: No; I asked that.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS: No, for generally we pay for statues ourselves; but in this case we have accepted the statue and promised to set it up in a certain place, and it is not open to us now to say whether it is in the interest of artistic London to depart from that promise.

PARISH CHURCHES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That this Bill be read a third time."—
(*Lord Balfour of Burleigh.*)

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That this Bill do pass."—(*Lord Balfour of Burleigh.*)

Question put.

Motion agreed to. 

BODIES CORPORATE (JOINT TENANCY) BILL [H.L.]

Third Reading (which stands appointed for this day) put off to Monday next.

LUNACY BILL [H.L.]

Third Reading (which stands appointed for this day) put off to Monday next.

House adjourned at fifty-five minutes after Five of the clock

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 28th April 1899.

MR. SPEAKER took the Chair at Three of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [H.L.] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, namely:—

Kirkcaldy Corporation and Tramways Bill [H.L.]

Ordered that the Bill be read a second time.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing

Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, namely:—

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill.

Ordered that the Bills be read a second time upon Monday next.

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, namely:—

Millwall Dock.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

BRIGG URBAN DISTRICT GAS BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

GREAT NORTHERN AND STRAND RAILWAY BILL.

As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time.

LONDON, BRIGHTON, AND SOUTH COAST RAILWAY (PENSIONS) BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

SHOTLEY BRIDGE AND CONSETT DISTRICT GAS BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

MILLWALL DOCK.

Petition for Bill; referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

LONDON, WALTHAMSTOW, AND EPPING FOREST RAILWAY (No. 2).

Petition for Bill; referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F).

Mr. Hargreaves Brown reported from the Committee on Group F of Private Bills, That the parties opposing the London Improvements Bill had stated that the evidence of John Dunn, 1, John Street, St. James's Square, S.W., was essential to their case; and it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said John Dunn do attend the said Committee upon Monday next, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Ordered, That John Dunn do attend the Committee on Group F of Private Bills upon Monday next, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

AIRE AND CALDER NAVIGATION BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL.

Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.

PILOTAGE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.

Ayr Burgh Bill.

Shirebrook and District Gas Bill.

Redditch Gas Bill.

Queen's Ferry Bridge Bill [H.L.]

Bristol Floods Prevention Bill [H.L.].

Perth Water, Police, and Gas Bill [H.L.].

Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

KENSINGTON AND NOTTING HILL ELECTRIC LIGHTING BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table.

ABERDEEN HARBOUR BILL [H.L.]

Reported, without Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time.

NORTHERN ASSURANCE COMPANY BILL [H.L.]

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table.

HERNE BAY WATER BILL [H.L.]

Reported, without Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time.

WALTON-ON-THAMES AND WEYBRIDGE GAS BILL [H.L.]

Reported, without Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time.

GLASGOW DISTRICT SUBWAY BILL [H.L.]

Reported, without Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

GREENOCK AND PORT GLASGOW TRAMWAYS BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

ST. ALBANS GAS BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—

Crowborough District Gas Bill.

St. David's Water and Gas Bill, with Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law relating to Charges on Land, and to matters connected therewith." [Land Charges Bill [H.L.]]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the use of electrical power on tramways at Greenock, Port Glasgow, and Gourock; and for other purposes." [Greenock and Port Glasgow Tramways Bill [H.L.]]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to extend the powers of and amend the Act relating to the St. Albans Gas Company; and for other purposes." [St. Albans Gas Bill [H.L.]]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW, ETC.

Ordered, That the Standing Committee on Law, etc., have leave to sit this day during the Sitting of the House.—(*Mr. Stuart-Wortley.*)

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRADE, ETC.

Ordered, That the Standing Committee on Trade, etc., have leave to sit until half-past Three o'clock, until the conclusion of the Consideration of the Sale of Food and Drugs Bill, notwithstanding the Sitting of the House.—(*Mr. John Ellis.*)

COTTAGE HOMES BILL.

Sir A. Acland-Hood, Mr. Birrell, Mr. Victor Cavendish, Mr. Goddard, Mr. Gretton, Mr. John Hutton, Mr. Grant Lawson, Mr. Herbert Lewis, Colonel Milward, Mr. Paulton, Mr. Joseph A. Pease, Earl Percy, Mr. Pretyma, Mr. T. W. Russell, and Mr. Soames nominated Members of the Select Committee on the Cottage Homes Bill.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Sir William Walrand.*)

PETITIONS.

BOROUGH FUNDS ACT, 1872.

Petitions for alteration of Law;—From Norwich;—and, Epsom; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from West Ham, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING (CLAUSES) BILL.

Petition from Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND VALUES (TAXATION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from the Incorporated Society of Law Agents in Scotland, against; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL VETO) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Strathaven; — Harthill;—Galashiels;—Galston;—Methil;—Easdale; — Falkirk; — Glasgow; — Saltcoats; — Peebles; —Church of Scotland Temperance Society;—Aberdeen;—Lassmahagow; — Oban;—Penicuik;—Laurieston; — Bannockburn; — Moffat;—Kames;—Banchory;—and, Ternan; to lie upon the Table.

METROPOLIS MANAGEMENT ACTS AMENDMENT (BY-LAWS) BILL.

Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Bridgewater;—Cakemore;—Cradley Park; — Silkstone;—Whitwood; — Foxholes;—Newlands; — Snydale (two); — Good Hope; — Denby Grange; — Newmarket Haigh Moor;—Flockton;—Bowers No. 3;—Tong;—Bold;—Lea Green;—Beeston Manor;—Waleswood;—Pilsley;—Thrybergh Hall;—Birchwood; — and, Bullgill Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.

Petitions for extension to women ;—
From Westgate-on-Sea ;—and Royal,
Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of
Scotland ; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour ;
to lie upon the Table.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS BILL.

Petitions in favour ;—From Middles-
brough ;—Coatbridge ;—Llanelly ;—and,
Ystalyfera ; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment ;—
From Aberdeen ;—and, Peebles ; to lie
upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Romford, against ; to lie
upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour ;—From Chester ;
—Salford ;—Beverley ;—and, Bath ; to
lie upon the Table.

SCHOOL BOARD CONFERENCES (SCOT- LAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour ;—From Old Monk-
land ;—and, Aberdeen ; to lie upon the
Table.

TEMPERANCE REFORM (THREEFOLD OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour ;—From Selkirk ;
—Paisley ;—Kintyre ; — Galashiels ; —
Glasgow (two) ;—Perth ;—South Ronald-
shay ;—and, Fetteresso ; to lie upon the
Table.

TOWN COUNCILS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition of the Incorporated Society of
Law Agents in Scotland, in favour ; to
lie upon the Table.

WORKMEN'S HOUSES TENURE BILL.

Petition of Mining Association of
Great Britain, against ; to lie upon the
Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

JUDICIAL TRUSTEE RULES.

Paper [presented 27th April] to be
printed. [No. 172.]

PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION (EXPENSES).

Address for "Return of Expenses in-
curred in each year from 1892 to 1898
in Promoting and Opposing Private Bills
before Parliament—

- (a) by County Councils, Town Coun-
cils, and other Urban District
Councils in England and Wales, and
by the Corporation of London ;
- (b) by County Councils, Town Coun-
cils, or Burgh Commissioners in
Scotland ;
- (c) by Urban Sanitary Authorities and
Bodies of Town Commissioners not
Urban Sanitary Authorities in Ire-
land ;
- (d) by Harbour, Navigation, Pier, and
Port Authorities ;
- (e) by Railway, Canal, Tramway, Har-
bour, Dock, Gas, Water, Electric
Lighting, and other Companies

(in continuation of Parliamentary Paper.
No. 356, of Session 1892)."

"And similar Return with regard to
Provisional Orders."—(Mr. D. A.
Thomas.)

PUBLIC REVENUE (AGGREGATE RECEIPTS).

Return ordered, "of the total amounts of Public Revenue derived from Taxes levied by Parliament and from any other sources, distinguishing between the sums received for Payment to the Exchequer and the sums otherwise applied, in the years ended the 31st day of March 1878, 1888, and 1898, respectively."—(*Mr. Gibson Bowles.*)

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Mr. Halsey reported from the Committee of Selection, That they had discharged the following Member from the Standing Committee on Law and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure: Mr. Warr; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Renshaw.

Report to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) (EVENING CONTINUATION SCHOOLS).

Copy presented,—of Scotch Code of Regulations for Evening Continuation Schools, 1899, with Schedule and Appendices [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1883 (PROCEEDINGS).

Account presented,—showing the Receipts and Expenditure on account of Bankruptcy Proceedings during the year ended 31st March 1899 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 173.]

COMPANIES (WINDING-UP) ACT, 1890.

Account presented,—showing Receipts and Expenditure on account of Proceedings during the year ended 31st March 1899 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 174.]

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

Accounts presented,—of the Metropolitan Police, the Police Pension Fund, and the Metropolitan Police Courts, for the year ended 31st March 1899 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 175.]

QUESTIONS.

THE TRANSVAAL.

SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any communication has been made to the President of the Transvaal declaring the dynamite concession to be a breach of the Convention; and, if so, whether any reply to it has yet been received?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): The answer to both questions is in the affirmative. Papers will shortly be laid before Parliament.

PLAGUE IN INDIA.

MR. MONCKTON (Northants. N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he can inform the House whether the plague has reached Durbungur and Muzaffarpur, in Behar; and, if so, what is the rate of mortality?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The plague reached Durbungur a month ago. During the fortnight ended 3rd April 42 plague deaths were reported from the Darbhanga district. For the fortnight ended 24th April only one plague death has been reported. One plague death was reported from the Muzaffarpur district during the week ended 3rd April. Since that week and before that week no plague deaths are reported to have occurred in that district.

FOREIGN PLASTERERS.

MR. STEADMAN (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the British Consuls at Florence and Milan did in conjunction with the mayors of those places sign or countersign the contracts of the foreign plasterers imported into England during the present dispute in the plastering trade; and, if so, whether they were acting within their right as representatives of the British Government?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. St. JOHN BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): Her Majesty's Consuls having been asked to report on this subject, Her Majesty's Consul at Milan has stated that no such contracts have been signed or counter-signed by him. Neither he nor the municipal authorities know of the existence of any such contracts. No reply has yet been received from Florence.

THE CONGO AND THE BAHR-EL-GHAZEL.

SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the Government of the Congo State has been encouraged, by a recent statement on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, to treat the leases from us of territory to the north and west of the Lado enclave as being still in force, and the Bahr-el-Ghazel open to Congolese occupation?

MR. BRODRICK: Nothing has been said on this subject on behalf of Her Majesty's Government in addition to what has already been laid before Parliament.

MILITARY FORCES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

MR. T. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the responsible Government of the Cape Colony asked Her Majesty's Government for any increase in its military forces in South Africa to defend the possessions of Her Majesty against possible attack?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: No, Sir; the Cape Government did not ask Her Majesty's Government for any increase in the military forces in South Africa, but the intention to increase the garrison was communicated to them, and they were willing to provide, temporarily, barrack accommodation.

INEBRIATE REFORMATORIES.

MR. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is aware that, owing to there being at present no State or certified inebriate reformatory having accommodation for males, the Inebriates Act of last year is almost a dead letter; and what steps he proposes to take, or to recommend the local authorities to take, to enable the Act to be put in force?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir M. W. RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): I cannot altogether agree with the suggestion in the first paragraph of the Question. At the same time, I should be very glad to see local authorities coming forward more readily and assisting the operation of the Act, particularly as regards males, by either establishing reformatories themselves, alone or in combination, or by promising grants or contributions to private persons or associations who are willing to erect reformatories. As I have already stated, I do not at present feel justified in setting up a State reformatory; but I have secured substantial Government contributions for persons committed to certified reformatories. It is to these reformatories that in any case the largest number of committals would be made, and it is upon them that the effectiveness of the Act must mainly depend. I may add that I am collecting information from the police authorities throughout the country as to the number of persons within their districts apparently qualified for committal under section 2 of the Act. When the information is complete I propose in proper cases to draw the special attention of the local authorities to their responsibility in the matter.

MR. HOBHOUSE: Does the right honourable Gentleman admit that at present there is no accommodation for males in any certified reformatory?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: Yes, that is quite true. One or two of the arrangements which I had hoped would come into effect have broken down.

MARGARINE IN IRELAND.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland will he explain why the imports of margarine into Ireland from English and Scotch ports are not described as margarine in the Custom House Daily Shipping List, as is done in the case of margarine imported from the Continental ports, and whether he will give the number of prosecutions for illegal sales of margarine in Dublin, Cork, Belfast, and other Irish ports during the year 1898?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. GERALD BALFOUR): The inquiry contained in the first part should be addressed to the President of the Board of Trade. As regards the second part, there were 35 prosecutions for illegal sales of margarine in Dublin in 1898, all of which resulted in convictions. In Cork there were two prosecutions in the same period, both of them leading to convictions, and in Belfast there were 16 prosecutions with a similar result. From returns received from 15 other Irish ports it appears that no such prosecutions took place at any of them in 1898. I may add that since the 1st January last there have been five prosecutions in Limerick, resulting in four convictions.

RUSSO-PERSIAN BANK.

MR. DRAGE (Derby): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Foreign Office has received any information with regard to the Russo-Persian Bank which has been founded at Tiflis for the purpose of obtaining and working concessions in Persian territory, and whether the Russo-Persian Bank is, like the Russo-Chinese Bank, tantamount to the Russian government?

MR. BRODRICK: We have received no information of the foundation of a Russo-Persian Bank at Tiflis, nor any particulars as to a bank of that name.

BUNDER ABBAS IMPORTS.

MR. DRAGE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether 93 per cent. of the imports into Bunder Abbas comes from British territory; whether the same proportion of the tonnage entering that port belongs to British subjects; and whether any information has reached the Foreign Office of the acquisition by the Russian Government from the Persian Government of any concession in Bunder Abbas for a coaling station, a railway terminus, or any other purpose?

MR. BRODRICK: The latest statistics available show that the imports into Bunder Abbas in 1897 from the United Kingdom and India amounted to 91 per cent. of the whole. All the steamers which traded with Bunder Abbas in 1897 were under the British flag, and nearly half the sailing tonnage. The answer to the second paragraph is in the negative.

AUTONOMY OF FINLAND.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government are aware that, by a manifesto of the Tsar of Russia of 15th February 1899, the constitutional autonomy of Finland has been abridged; whether it be the intention of the Russian Government, on its own motion and in defeasance of the constitutional rights of the Finnish Diet, to increase the army recruited in Finland from 5,600 to 35,000 soldiers on the active list; whether he has information to show that this action of the Russian Government has produced resentment in Finland, which is shared by the people of Holland and the Scandinavian peninsula; and whether, in view of the proposals of the Tsar in favour of the reduction of European armaments, Her Majesty's Government propose to make any representations thereon to the Russian Government?

MR. BRODRICK: I fear I can add nothing to what I stated yesterday with

regard to the general purport of the Emperor of Russia's manifesto respecting Finland, and the questions to which it refers are not such as would give Her Majesty's Government any right to make representations.

NEW ZEALAND AND SAMOA.

SIR H. MEYSEY-THOMPSON (Stafford, Handsworth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Premier of New Zealand offered a regiment of that Colony's Volunteers to assist the Government during the recent Samoan difficulty; and, if so, what answer (if any) was given to this offer?

MR. BRODRICK: The answer to this Question is in the affirmative. The offer was, however, declined, as Her Majesty's Government considered the naval force in Samoan waters sufficient to cope with the exigencies of the situation. In conveying this decision to Lord Ranfurly with the requisite explanation, Her Majesty's Government have expressed their high appreciation of the offer conveyed by the Premier of New Zealand.

PACIFIC CABLE.

MR. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Her Majesty's Government has now arrived at an agreement with the Governments of Australasia and Canada in the matter of the construction of the Pacific cable?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: Her Majesty's Government have made a proposal to the Governments of Canada and Australasia, but no final agreement has been made. The statements on this subject which have appeared in the Press do not accurately represent the proposals which have been made.

WINE FROM ALBURY DISTRICT OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

MR. T. CURRAN (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the largest cellars for the storage and exportation of Australian wines are situated in the Albury District of New South Wales, and that this Colony has long pursued a policy of free trade, levying no protective duties against the manufacturers of the Mother Country; and whether, in view of those facts, he will reconsider his decision to subject the wines imported from that Colony to the operation of the proposed increase of duty?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I believe it is the fact that the tariff of New South Wales is more favourable to our manufactures than that of the Colonies which I named yesterday. But New South Wales only sent 9,000 gallons of wine to us last year, which paid a duty of £450. I cannot think that so small an interest is sufficient to justify a departure from the fiscal system to which we have adhered for many years, even if there were no practical difficulties in treating one of the Australian Colonies separately in the matter.

THE PEKIN-HAN-KAU RAILWAY.

MR. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the prospectus of the Pekin-Han-kau Railway Loan states that the Société d'Etude de Chemins de Fer en Chine, otherwise the Franco-Belgian syndicate, has a preferential right over the Han-kau-Canton line in case the contract with the American syndicate is not carried through; whether the granting of this right to the said syndicate in face of the undertaking given by the Yamen to Sir Claude Macdonald is consistent with the claims of Great Britain in the Yang-tze region; and whether he will lay upon the Table the terms of the Pekin-Han-kau Railway contract?

MR. BRODRICK: We have never received the text of the Pekin-Han-kau Railway contract from the Chinese Government, who will be reminded of

their promise to communicate it. There will be no objection to laying upon the Table the terms of the agreement as published in a Shanghai newspaper, which are believed to be substantially accurate. The copy of the prospectus with which my honourable Friend has kindly supplied me appears to give a preferential right to the syndicate to continue the line to Canton in case the contract with the American syndicate is not carried through; but it should be borne in mind that this contingency will only arise if the British and Chinese Corporation, who are associated with the American syndicate in this matter, are not prepared to carry out the work.

FINLAND AND THE TSAR.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the fact that the Tsar's recent abrogation of the free constitution of Finland will increase the annual number of Finnish conscripts to the Russian army from 1,900 to 7,200, and the fact that the Tsar has recently given an extra grant of £9,000,000 to the Russian navy will be brought before the Peace Conference?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: My honourable Friend must know that it is impossible to make a statement with regard to the subject of this Question.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

MR. DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is aware that a large number of the county councils in Ireland have passed resolutions urging upon the Government the immediate necessity of establishing a Roman Catholic University in Ireland; and when he will bring in a Bill to settle this long-standing grievance of the Roman Catholics of Ireland?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): My attention has been called to the fact that the Irish county councils have passed a large number of resolutions about Home Rule, University education, political prisoners, coercion, and other matters which seem but remotely connected with roads and bridges. As regards the second part of the Question, I fear I am not in a position to add anything to the answer I gave yesterday.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: But will any steps be taken to deal with this question during the present Parliament?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I have nothing to add to the statement I have already made.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY [8TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith), CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, in the Chair.]

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1899-1900.

CLASS IV.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That a sum, not exceeding £5,153,986, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1900, for Public Education in England and Wales, including Salaries and Expenses of the Education Office in London, etc."

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (Sir J. GORST, Cambridge University): The amount of the Education Estimate this year is £8,753,986, which is an increase of £186,240 over the Estimate of last year, but this increase has arisen from purely automatic causes. When I moved the Education Vote last year I thought it was my duty to place before the Committee of Supply the

obstacles which prevented the money from obtaining the objects which the Committee had in view, and which in fact caused a considerable part of it to be wasted. I do not think there is any necessity for me to repeat those statements on the present occasion. One statement of minor importance which was erroneously attributed to me, but which I did not in fact make, gave rise to a good deal of controversy, but all the more important statements I made were neither contradicted nor controverted, and I believe they sank deeply into the mind of the public. There has been during the past year a very satisfactory progress of public opinion on the subject of education. The first and greatest obstacle which I mentioned last year was the early age at which children left school. This is the first reform necessary, for without it all other reforms in the education of the people will be nugatory. During the present Session a Bill has been introduced in this House for the purpose of making a moderate and valuable improvement in this direction. That Bill passed its Second Reading by a majority of more than 5 to 1, and the supporters of Her Majesty's Government who voted in favour of the Bill were as 3 to 1 as compared with those who voted against it. I am told by persons who have analysed the Division lists that there were 12 Members in the majority who represent Lancashire constituencies and 60—more than the whole of those who voted against it—who represent distinctly agricultural constituencies. A good many people hoped and were inclined to believe that the progress of education and the greater value which parents were disposed to attach to the education of their children might of itself cause a considerable increase in the number of children attending school after the compulsory age had been passed, but I am sorry to say that that supposition is not borne out by facts. Although the actual number of children in the elementary schools has increased, the relative number remains absolutely stationary. I find, for instance, comparing 1895 and 1898, that in both those years 24 per cent. of the children on the books of the schools were over 11; 13.6 per cent. were over 12; 4.7 per cent. over 13, and 1 per cent. over 14 years of age—exactly the same percentage in each year. As to the

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matter of irregularity of attendance, that is much more a local than an Imperial question. I do not mean to say that the law by which the attendance of children at school is endeavoured to be secured is an absolutely perfect one. I have no doubt it permits of amendment, but it would be of very little use to amend the law unless the local authorities and local opinion would sanction its being put into force. Last year I cited a considerable number of cases in both urban and rural constituencies in which, with the present law, a very satisfactory amount of attendance had been secured. During the past year the subject has been repeatedly discussed by the great school boards, attendance committees, and county councils, and other persons connected with education, and, although the discussions were too late to have much influence on the figures of the year to which I refer—1898—I should be extremely disappointed and very much surprised if, when the figures of 1899 are made up, there does not prove to have been a very great advance made by the energy and attention of these local authorities in securing a better attendance of children at school. As it is, so far as I can see, the rate of average attendance, which has been for three years slowly declining, has now begun to mount up again. Beginning with 1895, the average attendance was 81.61 per cent. of the children on the books; in 1896 it sunk to 81.55; 1897, 81.50; and this last year it has risen to 81.66 per cent., which is the largest average ever attained since the passing of the Act of 1870. But in this question it is fair that there should be a distinction drawn between the attendances of very young children and the older children. We begin school life at a very early age. Children are entitled to education from three years up to 14. Of course, there is a kind of idea in the minds of the public that you can make up for cutting short the intellectual food of a child of 12 or 13 by cramming knowledge into an immature infant which it cannot possibly assimilate, but we do not quite go the length of forcing them to go to school at three years of age. From three to five attendance is voluntary, and I can quite fancy that there may be parents who think it is better for their babes to remain at home than be sent to school at such an early age; but, taking

roughly the babes, the infant school children, and the children in the standards, the attendance of infants is only 70.79 per cent., while the attendance of children in the standards is 87.79 per cent. Those figures are not quite accurate, because there are very young children in the standards, and there are very old children classed with the infants, but they show that the older children do attend more regularly and attain a better percentage than the young children. There is one part of the statement I made last year which I should like to supplement on this occasion. The Committee will remember that I mentioned that complaints had been made of the unfit state in which children were sent to school. The claims of labour in many cases seem much more urgent than the claims of education, and I stated last year that there were undoubtedly an immense number of cases in which children who were supposed to be attending school as full-time scholars were employed to such an extent in labour that they came to school quite unfit to receive any intellectual instruction at all. Last year I spoke from conjecture only and the result of inquiries that had been made in some of the London schools, chiefly in the east and south of London. But the House of Commons was pleased last year to order a return of children on the books of schools as full-time scholars who were themselves working for wages or employed for profit, with their ages, standard, occupation, hours of labour, and wages. Forms were issued to all the 20,002 elementary schools in England and Wales, and when the returns were made up a few weeks ago it was found that a return of some kind or another had been received from all those schools except 640. Since then 120 more schools have sent in returns, and the return is now practically complete, and it will in a very short time be distributed to honourable Members. It is a painful and disappointing return. It casts a very lurid light on the social condition of large classes of the population, and it propounds a most difficult social problem for Governments and Parliaments to ponder over, which in due course, I have no doubt, will become a fresh subject for inquiry by Royal Commission or Select Committee. When the return was made up it furnished the

names of 144,000 children on the books as full-time scholars who were engaged as labourers for wages or profit—110,000 boys and 34,000 girls; and the few returns which came in since have added 1,000 more. But the returns reveal upon the face of them that this is only a part of the number of children so employed, and that there are multitudes of children working in this way whose names do not appear in the return. In the first place, the names of children have only been returned who were in regular employment. No notice is taken of children in casual or seasonal employment. One correspondent says—

“Many children are kept from school for days, sometimes weeks, together, for such work as picking stones in the fields, weeding, sheep-shearing, harvest, and potato-picking.”

Another correspondent says—

“During the hat-sewing season, which usually lasts from about February to Whitsuntide, many girls of all ages are employed, both before and after school hours, in sewing hats for their mothers. Some have been known to work from six a.m. to the time for coming to school, and again from school closing in the afternoon till bed-time.”

The names of none of these children appear in the return. Many correspondents, too, omit the names of children who do not themselves receive wages, but to whose parents the wages have been paid. A correspondent says—

“Several girls are employed by their parents at beading whenever necessary, and, of course, the wages earned are paid to the parents.”

Another correspondent says—

“In addition to these, very many children are employed by their parents at home, in the cabinet-making and boot trades, without remuneration. Such labour is often more exacting than in the cases such as those quoted above for remuneration.”

The names of none of these children appear in the return. A great many of the correspondents do not make a return in cases where the employment has not been prejudicial to health. One correspondent says—

“There are 12 boys now on the books who are employed out of school hours, and often in school hours, in picking potatoes, weeding, haymaking, etc.; but this interferes more with attendance than with health.”

'Another correspondent says—

"A good many children after school hours go into the streets to sell the evening papers and matches; but, as their occupations are not injurious to health, we do not suppose they come within the limits of your inquiry."

Another correspondent says—

"You surely cannot allude to boys selling the 'Echo' after school hours on their own account?"

Again, none of these names appear in the return. Other correspondents do not return children employed during school hours. One correspondent says—

"I may say that what employment there is takes place mainly in school hours, such as scaring birds, leading horses, picking up potatoes, and the like. There is no employment to speak of out of school hours here."

Another says—

"There are no children, so far as we know, employed out of school hours who attend full time. There are some illegally employed during school hours."

The names of these children, again, are not included in the return. A great many correspondents, too, say that the returns they make are avowedly incomplete, and that accurate and full information is not obtainable. On this point one correspondent says—

"I think that some portions of the information are manifestly absurd. I give the report as it was handed to me, but, I must acknowledge, with a decided mental reservation as to its accuracy."

Another says—

"The number of hours given is very unreliable; milk selling from 7.15 to 8.30 often covers 7.15 to 2, and in no case is there any scruple to extend the 'one or two hours' to half or whole days."

Then another says—

"This is a very incomplete list. A great many children are kept from school to pick shrimps, for which the mothers receive 4d. a gallon."

I think it is hardly necessary for me to argue before a Committee of the House of Commons that this kind of employment is extremely injurious to the schooling of the children and to the efficiency of the schools themselves. The returns are full of observations upon the

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disadvantages to the schools and to the children. A manager says—

"Several children who are unable to attend but very irregularly through winter owing to wet paths, etc., are kept at home during the fine days of spring and summer to help with farming, and so are almost wholly deprived of the only opportunity they have for attending school."

Another says—

"One boy begins work for his father as early as 3 a.m., and works again in the evening as late as 9 p.m. He often goes to sleep during morning school from sheer weariness. Another boy, employed at 'placing skittles' for 34½ hours per week, says he is engaged from 6 to 11 p.m. daily. The lad is often asleep in the afternoon during the progress of the lessons."

One manager calls special attention to the case of a boy, 12 years of age, employed in the feeding and care of pigs for 46 hours per week, who is said to be sleepy in school hours and to be unable to learn anything. The result of these inquiries has been to cause many school boards to pass resolutions upon the subject and a good many managers of Voluntary schools to express their warm approval of the inquiries the Department has ordered. One school board passed the following resolution—

"The Board, having received the various returns of the hours of labour imposed on children during their school years, is strongly of opinion that some appropriate action should be taken by the Government to prevent the excessive amount of labour found to be customary amongst school children, which must interfere with the success of their studies or with their health."

A Voluntary school manager says—

"May I be allowed to express my gratitude to the Education Department for making these inquiries, and to express the hope that the Department will be able to frame some regulation to meet and relieve the onerous conditions under which many of the young have to gain education? Without exaggeration I can truthfully assert that there are to-day in our National and Board schools thousands of little white slaves."

The ages of the children dealt with in the return are as follows:—Six years of age and under, 131; between six and seven, 1,120; between seven and eight, 4,211; between eight and nine, 11,027; and between nine and ten, 22,131. So the Committee will see that the very large bulk of these children are of extremely tender age. No doubt the

Committee would be glad to know what kind of labour is performed by children under six, and what wages they receive. I have taken a few examples. I find a little boy of six is engaged peeling onions 20 hours a week for a weekly wage of 8d. Another delivers milk 28 hours a week for the weekly wage of 2s. Another little boy of the same age is engaged in turning hose for 20 hours a week, and he is paid by 6d. being credited weekly to his savings bank account. There is a little boy engaged in pea picking at 1s. 3d. a week, and the champion boy, who is under six years of age, works in a brickfield at brick-making and earns a wage of 3s. 6d. a week. A little girl under six carries milk for 35 hours a week for her parents, and she receives no wages. Another little girl is engaged in seaming hose for 15 hours at a weekly wage of 1d. Another is a nurse girl—a nurse girl under six!—who works 29 hours a week for 2d. and her food; and another girl under six is an errand girl and runs about the streets 15 hours a week for a wage of 6d. The educational attainments of these children are, of course, very low. There are 329 of them in no standard at all; there are 3,890 in the first standard, 11,686 in the second, 24,624 in the third, and 36,907 in the fourth. Well, then, as to the nature of the occupations which they follow. The first occupations which I am going to mention are mainly those of boys, but in all boy occupations there are found a few girls, and in the same way in the latter occupations, which are those of girls, there are found a few boys. Of boys, there are selling newspapers 15,182, hawking other articles about the streets 2,435, other occupations, such as knocking people up early in the morning and taking out dinners, 8,627, shop boys 76,173, boys engaged in agriculture 6,115, and odd jobs 10,636. Then come the girls: minding babies 11,585, housework and laundrywork 9,254, needlework and light work, such as making card-boxes and things of that kind, 4,019. Now I come to the hours of employment. Under 10 hours a week 39,355, from 10 to 20 hours 60,268, from 21 to 30 hours 27,008, from 31 to 40 hours 9,778, from 41 to 50 hours 2,390, over 50 hours a week 793, of whom 75 are actually employed over 70 hours a week. Perhaps the Committee is

curious to know what these boys and girls who are employed 70 hours a week work at and what wages they get. A boy of 10, in Standard IV., is returned as a farm labourer working 72 hours a week for a wage of 3s. A boy of 12, in Standard IV., is also returned as a farm labourer working 87 hours a week for a wage of 2s. 6d. A newspaper boy of the age of 12, in Standard VI., works 100 hours a week, that is including Sundays, and receives 3s. 6d. and his meals. A boy of 12, in Standard III., works in a marine store dealer's shop, is employed 74 hours a week, and receives 1s. 6d. and his meals. A boy of 10 in Standard IV. is a donkey driver for 80 hours a week at a wage of 6s. In London there is a boy of 12, in Standard V., employed in a chemist's shop for 78 hours a week at a wage of 5s., and there is an errand boy of 12 years engaged at a dairy. He is in Standard VII., and therefore, presumably, a very promising lad. He works 72 hours a week for a wage of 4s. I think it would be economical for the country to deliver that boy from those conditions, as it is evident something might be made of him. There is a girl 13 years of age in a shop. She is in Standard V. and works 72 hours a week for a wage of 2s. There are several girls of various ages and in various standards who carry bark for woodcutters. They work 70½ hours a week for a wage of 6s. Now of these overworked children there are several concrete instances given in the Return, and I have picked out one or two as illustrations. Here is one—

"This boy rises between 3 and 4 every morning, starts out at 4.30 a.m. to wake up 25 working men, each paying him 3d. per week; returns from his rounds about 5.30, but does not go to bed again, as at 6 o'clock he has to go a round as 'newspaper boy' till 9 o'clock, when he comes to school. He is a very regular boy, but is often half asleep, especially in the afternoons of hot days."

Another boy—

"acts as latherer to a barber for 32 hours for a wage of 2s. He is at work on the whole of Saturday till 11 p.m., and for three hours on Sunday."

Another boy is—

"a greengrocer's boy, aged 12, Standard II., starts for London at 2.30 a.m., returns about 9.30, and then attends school."

Again there are—

"two girls aged 12, in Standard IV., who are employed daily, one for 3d. per week in housework and errands from 7.45 to 10, 12.30 to 1.30, and 4.30 to 8, and the other at 9d. per week and her food in carrying out parcels for a milliner from 7.30 to 9.30, 12.30 to 2, and 4.30 to 8."

Lastly, I have to call the attention of the Committee to the wages which these children get. Receiving under 6d. a week there are 17,084; from 6d. to 1s. a week, 47,273; from 1s. to 2s. a week, 40,293; from 2s. to 3s. a week, 19,757; and above 3s. a week, 8,123. There are besides a number who work for their parents and receive no wages, or whose wages are not stated. This works out at an average of about 1s. per child per week; but it must be mentioned, to be correct, that besides the money wages there are meals, and, in some cases, articles of clothing and other advantages in addition or in substitution for wages. That is the result of the inquiries which we have made, and I hope the Committee will forgive me adding it to the statement I made last year, when I was only able to speak on this matter from conjecture. Now, however, we have certain facts upon which we can go. Another thing I want to mention is what has been done with reference to enlarging the supply of teachers, because the deficiency in that supply is a very serious difficulty in the elementary education of the country, and if the attendance of the children were raised so as to bring more children into school, of course the pressure from the want of teachers would become still greater. My predecessor in office, Mr. Acland, began the plan of trying to draw more teachers into the profession, and I have endeavoured to follow up the policy he initiated. The alterations in the Code designed to enlarge the supply of teachers of different grades have nearly all occurred within the past five years, 1895-1899 inclusive. They are of two kinds, and only two kinds: those who draw upon a wider educational field—secondary schools and Universities; and those who draw upon a wider geographical field—Ireland and the Colonies. Now, with regard to the supply of pupil teachers. The passing of Oxford or Cambridge Junior Local Examinations, or the second-class certificate examination of the College of Preceptors, or any

other examination approved for this purpose by the Education Department, now qualifies in certain circumstances for admission to pupil teachership. As to assistant teachers: assistant teachers who have become such by passing specified examinations may now, in certain circumstances, become "provisionally certificated" teachers, a privilege formerly confined to those who had passed the Queen's Scholarship examination. Then graduates, or persons qualified to become graduates, may now be recognised as certificated teachers if they hold a certificate of proficiency in the theory and practice of teaching issued by a University or collegiate body and recognised by the Education Department. Lastly, graduates, or persons qualified to become graduates, may now be admitted to training colleges without examination for a year's training. Any candidate over 18 years of age, who has within two years passed any examination recognised for the purpose by the Education Department, may be admitted to a training college without further examination, and the examinations which are recognised by the Department are the Oxford and Cambridge Higher Local Examinations, the examinations of the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board, if the higher certificate is obtained, and the London, Victoria, and University of Wales Matriculation Examinations, if the candidate be placed in the first division. Then, secondly, all these privileges, the privileges with regard to recognition as certificated teachers and admission to training colleges, which have of late years been offered to graduates of any University of the United Kingdom, are now extended to graduates of any University in the British Empire which is recognised for the purpose by the Education Department. And recognition as certificated teachers is now given to teachers certificated by the Irish Commissioners of National Education in the first class, and trained, while untrained Irish certificated teachers of the first class and Irish certificated teachers of the second class may now be recognised as assistant teachers for two years. I quote these things to show that the Education Department has done its best to increase the supply of teachers, which has now become a considerable difficulty, and will

become still greater if educational reforms bring more children to the schools. Now, I am informed that the position and functions of the Vice-President as regards the House of Commons are to be criticised and discussed. I have always disliked being dragged into a Debate upon anything which has any kind of personal aspect, and it will be difficult to get me to join in any such discussion. I have sat here on many occasions in silence, and I have heard powers and authorities attributed to me which the office of Vice-President does not possess, and I have heard responsibilities attempted to be forced on me which do not in any way belong to my office. Now, I think that I may perhaps assist the Committee if it is proposed to embark in this discussion by reminding them what the functions of the Vice-President of the Council really are. It is not an ancient office whose attributes are to be sought for in custom and tradition. On the contrary, it is a very modern office. It was founded only in the year 1856, and the duties of the office are most plainly and clearly described in the Order in Council by which the office was constituted. This Order in Council is dated 25th February 1856. I will not read the whole of it, because it is a formal document; but I will read the first section of the Order, which describes the duties of the Lord President and the Vice-President—

“That for the future the establishment to be called the Education Department be placed under the Lord President of the Council, assisted by a member of the Privy Council, who shall be the Vice-President of the Committee of the said Privy Council on Education, and shall act under the direction of the Lord President, and shall act for him in his absence.”

These are the functions which I was appointed to discharge. I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to perform those functions, and I shall continue to do so so long as Her Majesty retains me in my present office.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Lichfield) said that after the very sad statement which had been made by the right honourable Gentleman the Vice-President he hoped that the Government would make some effort to prevent such a state of things continuing. It the House had not at present the power to prevent it altogether, he hoped some step would be

taken to protect the children and prevent the slavery which these children were undergoing. Although the facts had not been put before the House in a sufficiently concrete form to give all the information required, still quite enough had been done to assist the Government to protect the children. He hoped before the Vote was passed the Committee would hear that something would be done to protect these little white slaves, and that the Session would not pass without that protection being afforded to them.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That Item A (Salaries) be reduced by £1,000, in respect of the Salary of the Vice-President of the Council.”—(*Mr. Herbert Lewis.*)

MR. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) said that the local management of the public elementary schools in 8,000 parishes being entirely in the hands of one denomination, and very often of one individual, it was only fair that the Education Department, whatever Party might be in power at the time, should show the greatest consideration to Nonconformists, whose children were debarred from entering the teaching profession in these schools, who had no say in the local management of the schools, and who often had pressure brought to bear upon them to refrain from exercising their legal rights under the Free Education Act and the Conscience Clause. The system which the Education Department was called upon to administer had been well described by the Duke of Devonshire as a—

“Remarkable and anomalous system. It is a system which places in the hands of religious bodies and private individuals duties and powers which in every other country in the world are considered as appertaining to the State, and should be exercised by it.”

That was the “remarkable and anomalous system” which the Department was doing its best to uphold. And to these words he might add those of the late Mr. John Bright, which were peculiarly applicable at the present time—

“I am astonished that Churchmen throughout the country—I do not speak of the clergy, but the laity—have supported this Measure, because they are as much interested as the Dissenters in opposing any extension of the power of the clergy. Nothing tends more to impede the progress of liberty, nothing is more fatal to in-

dependence of spirit in the public, than to add to the powers of the clergy in matters of education."

And that was just what the Education Department were doing. One of their chief complaints was the way in which Nonconformists were in many thousands of parishes excluded from the teaching profession. The Vice-President of the Council had asked for particulars of cases in which Nonconformists had been prevented from becoming pupil teachers on religious grounds. What reply had he to make to the report of the education committee of the Wesleyan Conference, which stated that, out of 946 towns and villages in regard to which the committee made inquiry, it was found that there were only 88 cases in which candidates were admitted to become pupil teachers without any act of conformity to the Church of England, and 858 cases in which either confirmation or attendance at the services of the Church of England was required as a condition of becoming a pupil teacher? The Vice-President had told them that "the whole traditions of the Education Office were entirely non-partisan," but only the blindest partisanship could refuse to acknowledge the injustice with which Nonconformists were treated in this matter. Unless there were some elements of popular control introduced into the management of the schools it was impossible to obtain justice for Nonconformists, particularly in the rural villages. The management of elementary schools ought to command public confidence and respect. That confidence was neither won nor deserved by the exclusion of every section of the community, however large or influential, who did not belong to the Church. All the best elements of the community ought to be associated in the management of the school. When the policy of Free Education was under discussion, it was admitted on all hands that popular control ought to come. The "Standard" said, on the 24th April 1891—

"Abolish fees at the expense of the country at large, and at once the claim for local representative control will be irresistible."

But what had happened! The 10s. fee grant had been given, but no representative control had been accorded. Another grant of 5s. a head had been made; still

no public control has been given. Ten years ago who would have deemed it possible that 15s. a head could have been granted for elementary education, and that yet in the parishes where there is only one school to which Nonconformists are obliged by law to send their children there should be no public control? But the policy of the Government had been to ignore Nonconformist grievances, or, when they became too insistent to be ignored, to dismiss them with cheap sneers. He had repeatedly asked the Education Department to make an inquiry as to the grievances of Nonconformist parents whose children attended the National schools at Flint. An inquiry had been refused on the ground of private information received by the Vice-President of the Council. That information had been communicated to him (the speaker), and having made inquiry into the matter, he was astonished that the Committee of Council should have refused an inquiry. He had asked the Vice-President to allow the manager's letter to be published. That request had been refused. The managers had cleverly thrown the political fly over the Vice-President, who had swallowed the bait. The circumstances which had taken place at Flint afforded ample ground for a full and impartial local inquiry by the Education Department, but the Department preferred to rely on one-sided statements and to ignore everything that was said on the other side. As an example of the way in which parents at Flint had been treated, both by the school managers and by the Education Department, he instanced the case of Mr. R. T. Price, an agent of the Prudential Insurance Society. On the 23rd February he wrote to the manager of the Flint school asking which of the standards in the school to which he sent his child were free standards, and to this day he has had no reply to that communication. Because he had written a letter demanding a free place for his child, the rector of Flint complained to his employers, and when the case was brought before the House the Vice-President of the Council had not only not a single word of condemnation for that treatment of a parent who had only asked for his legal rights, but he actually went on to say that the officers of the Prudential Society most wisely were forbidden to engage in this kind of "poli-

tical and sectarian dispute." That statement was completely wrong. The agreement between Mr. Price and the Prudential Society did not contain a single word referring to either religious or political work. The agents of the society had a free hand in that respect. There was not a word in the agreement to prevent Mr. Price from taking part in politics, much less to prevent him from demanding a free place for his child. The Education Department, when appealed to, impliedly sanctioned the conduct of the rector, and censured that of the parent. Was that to be the policy of the Education Department in the future? When a parent wrote asking whether a school is a free one or not, was it to be understood that he might be bullied and intimidated to any extent, that he might be injured in his business, and that the Education Department would not say a word or make a sign to show their disapproval of such conduct? Were clergy who had the management of the schools, paid for by the public, to be allowed to publish a black list from the parish pulpit containing the names of parents who had dared to demand their rights under the Conscience Clause, and that in the case of a school 90 per cent. of whose income is derived from the Government Grant and only 10 per cent. from subscriptions? If this was the policy that was to be pursued by the Education Department it would be well that Nonconformists all over the country should know it. At the last General Election the Unionist Party received tens of thousands of Nonconformists' votes. These Unionist electors could not too clearly understand the way in which their grievances were jeered at by a Tory Government whenever they were brought before the House of Commons. When complaint was made that parents had been held up to obloquy from the parish pulpit for claiming their rights under the Conscience Clause, the Vice-President of the Council thought it a sufficient answer that they were "only Nonconformist preachers."

SIR J. GORST: I never said that.

MR. LEWIS: The right honourable Gentleman used as an argument in defence that they were Nonconformist ministers.

SIR J. GORST: Never.

MR. LEWIS said that the argument of the right honourable Gentleman was that, as the persons in question were Nonconformist preachers, they could "talk back" at the rector. But these persons were asking for their rights, not as Nonconformist preachers, but as citizens. It was, he supposed, useless to appeal for justice to a Government which had acted on such principles. They could only take every opportunity of recording their protest until a Government came into power sufficiently enlightened to treat with fairness and consideration those who were now excluded from any share in the local management of the schools to which they were obliged to send their children. He moved to reduce the right honourable Gentleman's salary by £100.

MR. BIRRELL (Fife, W.) said that he could hardly believe his ears when, coming into the House, he heard the right honourable Gentleman approach the one question which, he should have thought, he would studiously refrain from touching upon, and which hitherto he had always refrained from touching upon—namely, the relation which the right honourable Gentleman occupied, in the opinion of the House, to the Department which he represented. The right honourable Gentleman was the Member for the University of Cambridge; he was admittedly one of the first authorities on educational questions; he had long held positions of authority; and he had abilities which all recognised and most must envy. The right honourable Gentleman would have the Committee believe—although he himself could never tell from the right honourable Gentleman's manner whether he wished everything he said to be believed—that his view of the position he held was that he was the bounden slave of the President of the Council, and was obliged to act under the direction of that President, regardless, apparently, of what his own opinions might be as to the right or wrong of things, and was unable to act in any other way. The right honourable Gentleman asked the Committee to believe that he retained that position—and indeed he flaunted the fact in the face of the House of Commons—in order to disregard the responsibility for the Measures advocated and the reforms proposed by his own side. He for one could not believe that the

House or the right honourable Gentleman himself believed that the position which he occupied in regard to education was anything of the kind. But, even if it were, he could not but remind the right honourable Gentleman how, in the early hours a few days ago, not only did the Vice-President receive a snub from the Government of which he was a Member, but the Lord President himself also. That was all very well for the Vice-President. The House had seen him, year in and year out, turning his cheek to the smiter with such docility and frequency that it would seem as if the right honourable Gentleman had come to regard the process as a kind of moral massage to which he had to submit for the good of his soul and his moral constitution. But that was not altogether the case with the noble Duke the President of the Council. He, at least, had not been accustomed to undergo this sort of treatment; and, therefore, it was not surprising to find that the noble Duke had fled into the marches of Wales and whispered into the ears of his old constituents a word which was not in the vocabulary of the Vice-President, large as that vocabulary was—the word “resignation.” The problem before the House on that occasion was a purely educational question. It was the most purely educational question that it was possible to conceive. He had never denied—indeed, he had asserted many times in and out of the House—that the so-called religious question of which so much was talked in the House was not a school question at all. It was a question of the platform, as a rule, which naturally excited violent feelings on both sides of the House; but, as a rule, when one left the atmosphere of the platform and went into the school, where the work of education was going on, one passed into a better atmosphere. But the question at issue the other day concerned the Code. That was the Ark of the Covenant, the pulse of the machine—the very thing which the right honourable Gentleman cared about; which he, as an educationist, was attached to; and which the House ought to care about—namely, the kind of education given and the conditions under which it was given in the primary schools. The Department which the right honourable Gentleman represented, and the Lord President under whose direction the right honourable Gentle-

man acted with such remarkable amiability and docility, had between them determined on a reform which, in their judgment, was absolutely necessary if the educational work of the country was properly to be conducted, if the children were to be properly taught, and the pupil teachers were to learn the business of the profession in which they had been induced to engage. And yet when the First Lord of the Treasury, acting on information supplied by he did not know whom, stated that those reforms would not meet with favour from some of the Tony Lumpkins behind him—representatives of agricultural constituencies, and not authorities on educational questions—not only the Vice-President but the Lord President himself gave the go-by to their own reforms, and the whole thing was relegated, as the right honourable Gentleman said, “to some other epoch.” The Committee knew what that meant; at least they did not know what it meant, and that was the reason for that explanation by the right honourable Gentleman. It was not in accordance with the traditions of the House, or with the best interests of the great trust reposed in the hands of the right honourable Gentleman, that the work of his Department should be carried on in the House of Commons by one who acted solely, as the right honourable Gentleman would have the Committee believe, under the direction of someone who sat elsewhere, and who was content not to insist upon his right as a Member of the Government, or upon his duty as the representative of a great Department, to require those reforms which his Department thought to be necessary. It was not in accordance with good sense or good feeling that the right honourable Gentleman should remain in the position which he occupied. It placed everybody in a false position. They put a point before the right honourable Gentleman and he agreed with them. The right honourable Gentleman showed that education required that thing, and yet he calmly said that the Government of which he was a Member did not think it desirable that the reform should be insisted upon, and was content to let it stand on one side. The relationship of the right honourable Gentleman with his Department was, he considered, most unsatisfactory, and he regretted that it continued.

MR. CRIPPS (Gloucester, Stroud) said he did not propose to follow the last speaker as to the conduct of the office; that was a matter for the Vice-President himself; but there was one matter which he would like to call attention to with regard to the pupil teachers, upon which the right honourable Gentleman had been attacked. The particular point which he wished to refer to was the withdrawal of the Code. He himself was a strong advocate in favour of the proposal being withdrawn upon the ground that one of the great difficulties at the present time was the want of sufficient teachers. Had the proposal been upheld the difficulty would be increased, and he thought the Education Department and the Vice-President were entitled to the congratulations of the Committee for having disposed of the difficulty when it was pointed out to them by withdrawing a clause of the Code which only operated in the direction of increasing the difficulties from which the country was now suffering in obtaining assistant teachers. All those interested in the cause of education must recognise that this was about the most important with which they had to deal. There was an increasing difficulty in obtaining teachers, owing to the growing needs of the schools, and the growing number of elementary schools, and the Vice-President was to be congratulated on what he said he had done in trying to deal with this great difficulty. He was trying to do it in two ways: one by increasing the area of the educational field, and the provision of training colleges, and the widening of the area of activity. He (Mr. Cripps) thought that the time had come when something must be done to prevent something like a deadlock occurring in our educational system. The Vice-President had called attention to certain statistics which were not yet published, but it was impossible to appreciate their true character until the figures were before them. They could not rely on the samples produced, as a true picture could not be drawn until the whole of the figures were before them with regard to what had been said by the honourable Member for the Flint Boroughs. In the first place he had drawn attention to the State system of education. In one sense we had a State system, but the honourable Member apparently forgot that we had also a mixed

system of education, partly carried out by the State and partly carried out locally. It was because we had this dual system that some of the difficulties to which the honourable Member had referred would naturally arise. In regard to funds, however, he disputed that the State had any claim in the matter of local control either in the case of Voluntary schools or School Boards. State funds were under the control of Parliament and the Education Department, and were not in any way placed under the jurisdiction of the popular bodies in the sense in which the honourable Member referred. The popular control represented the expenditure of the ratepayer, but as far as State funds were provided for the purposes of education the State had to see that the education given was efficient through the agency of its inspectors. The managers of the Voluntary schools represented the subscribers in the same way as the School Boards represented the ratepayers of the locality. The managers of a Voluntary school represented the subscribers in the same way that a School Board represented the ratepayers of the locality.

SIR H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): Under the trust deeds of several National schools every manager must be a member of the Church of England.

MR. CRIPPS said he objected to those trustees and their limitation personally. The honourable Member for Nottingham (Mr. Yoxall) spoke in the same sense in the House the other night, and his (the speaker's) experience was that in a large number of cases in the selection of these managing bodies they did not consider what the denomination was to which a particular manager belonged, but whether he was a suitable person to overlook educational and financial matters. He quite agreed that it was necessary to get the best elements in the community to manage the education, but were they likely to get that by the School Board system?

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: No!

MR. CRIPPS said he agreed with the honourable Gentleman; and if they took the test in question he held that it was met much more in the Voluntary schools than in the small Board school. Under the

small School Board system they had far worse bodies and worse educational results than in the management of the Voluntary schools, and the reason was that Voluntary schools did, as a matter of fact, attract better elements of the community than the small School Boards in various parts of the country. The honourable and learned Member who had just spoken talked about the sectarian character of the Education Department, and attacked the Vice-President as though the Department unduly favoured the Church of England schools. He did not want to bandy words across the floor of the House, but his impression had always been exactly the opposite. What they complained of, and what he had complained of to the Vice-President of the Council more than once, was that the requirements of the Department had more than swallowed up any additional State assistance the friends of the Voluntary schools had been enabled to obtain from them.

SIR H. FOWLER: I should like to interpose for one moment in order to make my position quite clear upon the question of finance, so that there may be no misunderstanding between the honourable Member opposite and myself. I will take two cases; and first, the case with which he dealt, the police cost. Part of the cost of police is granted out of the Imperial Fund. The honourable Gentleman was quite right in saying that that grant is subject to the certificate of the police inspector appointed by the Crown that the force is sufficient. So far the argument holds good between the police and the Voluntary schools, namely, that the education inspector has to be satisfied that the education given is efficient. But let us go a step further. The control of the police, the expenditure of the grant from this House is entirely in the hands of the local representatives of the community. That money is not granted to any private set of individuals; it is granted to those who are elected by the ratepayers, and in that way public control—I have never asked in the House for a similar extent of public control in reference to Voluntary schools—public control is secured. But when you go outside the police you have a much stronger case. For the very small sum which this House votes in respect of the

police, it votes millions for local purposes, and that money is entirely controlled by the local representatives. They spend the money, they decide how the money shall be spent, and they increase their expenditure as they think fit. And the point of the argument is that in the Voluntary schools five-sixths of the cost is defrayed by money raised from the general taxation of the country to which all classes contribute, and those classes have no voice in the expenditure of that money, and in 8,000 parishes in this kingdom they are compelled to send their children to these schools. It is only just and right and fair that the parents and parishioners should have some voice in the expenditure of the large sum of money to which they contribute.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said there was one Tony Lumpkin who would be ready to follow the right honourable Gentleman the Vice-President into the Lobby, and, at all events, a Tony Lumpkin was quite as good as a Charles Surface. With all respect to the right honourable Gentlemen, he could not help thinking that he would cultivate better relations with the agricultural interest if he understood, once and for all, that in the rural districts they did not object to education up to a certain limit, but they must draw the line somewhere. What they did oppose was an education which they considered absolutely useless, which did the maximum of harm and the minimum of good, and which practically resulted in driving the agricultural labourer off the land. With the land going out of cultivation—as it was in that part of the country with which he was acquainted—by thousands of acres, they could not afford those luxuries which honourable Gentlemen on the other side were so fond of thrusting upon them. The agricultural interest had suffered many things at the hands of right honourable Gentlemen on his own side, but even the crushed worm would turn. Yet, in consideration of what the right honourable Gentleman did for them 10 days ago by withdrawing his obnoxious proposal in regard to pupil teachers, he should support him in the Lobby on this occasion and vote against the Amendment.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) said his only excuse for

intervening in that Debate was that he was the solitary representative in the House of a large class of the community which had the unique distinction of being oppressed, with almost equal injustice, by both sides of the House—he meant the Irish and Roman Catholic schools throughout Great Britain. They had heard a great deal as to the rights of Nonconformists on the education question, but they had never heard anything like a full and fair admission of the claims of that section of the community on whose behalf he rose to address the Committee. Voluntary schools, so far as the Irish Catholics were concerned, had been left in almost as bad a position by the present Government as they were in before. It was true that this Government had given them an additional grant, but this had been already more than swallowed up by the additional demands made by the Department. His own constituency was inhabited by undoubtedly one of the poorest populations in the United Kingdom. It consisted of Irishmen engaged in the worst and the most precarious forms of employment. What did he find when he went to the Irish Catholic schools there? He could scarcely trust himself to express the feelings those schools produced in his mind. He found there a number of children the poverty of whose parents and homes was but too clearly manifested by their condition. Many of them were in garments that were ragged, and without shoes and stockings. And how was the school kept up? This school of the poorest of the poor was kept up largely by the pence of the poor. The parents of those children were not content to take the practically free education which was given to them at the entire expense of the community in the Board school; they preferred to send their children to the school where they were brought up in the faith of their fathers. But this was not all. These poor parents not only paid a portion of the expenses of their own school, but out of their own pockets they paid a portion of the expenses of a school founded on a basis they could not possibly accept. The answer given to that was that the School Board system was purely unsectarian, and therefore no objection could be raised to it on religious grounds. Sectarian and unsectarian were words which were

more easily employed than defined. He could understand that from a Protestant point of view the reading of the Bible without comment was unsectarian, but from a Catholic point of view there could not be a more sectarian act. Whose fault was it that the present state of affairs existed? He hoped his right honourable Friend would not say it was the fault of the Irish Catholic parent, because he had already given his share to the Board school, and they could not ask him to be three times taxed. The solution of the question had not yet been found. There had been a great deal of bigotry exhibited in regard to this question. Some Gentlemen were more anxious that a school should be under a School Board than that it should be efficient as a Voluntary school. On the other hand he was afraid that there were honourable Members who were more anxious that a school should be Voluntary, even at the risk of the education being bad, than that the school should be under a local School Board. Well, he took his side as between the two stools. He was equally in sympathy and out of sympathy with both. He might say, in justice to his own views, that he held them at personal and political risks. He thought, as an Irish Catholic, familiar with the methods adopted in regard to National schools, that it was unfair that in a large number of the country districts Nonconformists should be forced into the Voluntary schools without any protection for their faith. He claimed for the Nonconformist children that which he demanded for the Catholic children, that they should be brought up without any offence or prejudice to the faith of their fathers. He thought that honourable Gentlemen opposite were fighting for their Voluntary schools on wrong lines. If they would make up their minds to have, if not popular control, at least a form of control in which the Nonconformist parents should have a representation in the management of the school, by which the faith of their children would be safeguarded, they would enormously strengthen instead of weakening the case in behalf of the Voluntary schools. He thought a just settlement of the question might be reached on the lines of the Canadian system, by which, as he understood it, parents were allowed to ear-mark the

rates for the school to which they desired to send their children. He thought that such a just settlement of the question was not beyond the resources of British statesmanship.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) said he must protest against one observation which had fallen from his honourable Friend the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool in his very interesting, able, and fair speech. The honourable Gentleman had complained that honourable Members on that (Opposition) side of the House had resented the action of the Irish Members in fighting for their own schools. He really did not think that any honourable Member had ever resented that action by the Irish Members. What they had protested against was, that the Irish Members should have thought fit, in the interest of their own schools, not merely to support the grant of 5s. per head to Irish Catholic schools, but to support the system which forced Nonconformist children to go into Anglican schools, where they were excluded from the teachership.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR said there had never been an Amendment proposed in the course of a Debate on an Education Bill dealing with the difficulty to which the honourable Member had referred which the vast majority of the Irish Members did not support.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE was sorry to have to correct his honourable Friend. On the contrary, a Motion was submitted to the House—

"That in the opinion of this House it is essential to adjust an efficient system of education that there shall be within the reach of every child in England and Wales a public elementary school under local representative management."

Not a single Irish Member supported that Resolution.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR said he was present and heard the Motion, and the speech in its favour by the honourable Member, and he walked out of the House because his honourable Friend in his speech had made a violent and unpromising attack on all Voluntary schools.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he was perfectly certain that in the whole course

Mr. T. P. O'Connor.

of his observations in support of that Amendment he had never referred at all to Roman Catholic schools. His argument was confined exclusively to Anglican schools in those parishes in which the majority of the children were Nonconformists. That was a very wide distinction, and went to the root of the matter. His honourable Friend referred to the case of the constituency he represented, and said that it was a poor constituency, and that the Roman Catholics could not support their own schools as well as the Board schools. But when there was an Amendment moved from that side of the House in favour of allocating the 5s. grant to the necessitous schools, rather than to the rich schools, his honourable Friend did not support it. It was part of their complaint that the grant was made to the rich schools rather than to the poor schools, in order to enable them to fight the Board schools. But if the Roman Catholics supported their own schools, they got special privileges for these schools. He found, for example, that in one the voluntary subscriptions amounted to £73, whereas the State grants amounted to £1,000: that was, that the voluntary subscriptions were only a fifteenth of the total income of that school. The Roman Catholics had also the special privilege that all their teachers were Roman Catholics. No Nonconformist, or Anglican, or member of another faith could ever become a teacher in a Roman Catholic school. The Nonconformists had no such special privilege. As a matter of fact, there were Roman Catholic teachers in the Board schools throughout the kingdom, and they got fair and equal treatment in that respect. Roman Catholics had the principles of their own faith taught at the expense of the State. Every Catholic school was, for all purposes, a mission room of the Roman Catholic faith, endowed out of the funds of the State, and he did not think his honourable Friend would say that such treatment was illiberal. A reference had been made to the Board schools as if they were Nonconformist institutions. As a matter of fact, the majority of the teachers in the Board schools were members of the Anglican and Roman Catholic faiths, and the Nonconformist teachers were considerably in the minority. He was glad that the honourable Member had made the speech he

had done, because it proved that he had reconsidered his position, and he hoped the next time a Motion such as he referred to was proposed in the House the honourable Member for Scotland Division would support it.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Then, you make a different speech.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Surely his honourable Friend was an experienced enough Parliamentarian to vote for a Resolution if it commended itself to his judgment, and not because of the speeches made in support of it. If the honourable Member's views were to obtain in the House, few Motions indeed would be carried. Each supported a Resolution from his own point of view. What was essential was the terms of the Motion, and not the arguments offered in support of it. In regard to the Canadian system, he thought his honourable Friend had been misinformed. He believed that, according to the last settlement in Canada, no religion was taught in the schools by the State teachers, but arrangements were made for teaching religion by others after the regular school hours. There was one point made by his honourable Friend with which he cordially agreed. He said that the Roman Catholic position was very different from the Anglican. Its attitude to Bible teaching was very different, and even the version of the Bible taught in the Roman Catholic schools was different from the Anglican. There was no common ground for religious teaching between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. But that was not the case with the Anglican communion and the Nonconformist. They had got the same version of the Bible, and in places like the Rhondda Valley all the Protestant sects and creeds agreed to a common form of religious teaching. Why could not the same thing be done in every part of the United Kingdom? No Anglican parent could possibly object, on religious grounds, to the teaching of the Board schools. A Return had been made to the House of Lords which gave the curriculum of religious teaching in every Board school in the kingdom, and he would ask the noble Lord the Member for Rochester whether he could name a single case where the teaching was objectionable, although he could

understand him to say it was inadequate. There was nothing taught contrary to the faith.

LORD H. CECIL (Greenwich) said the inadequacy was objectionable.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: In other words, there was nothing objectionable in having your own creed forced on anybody else and paid for by everybody else. The noble Lord could not say he objected to the religious teaching as such. All he could say was that his catechism was not taught, or his own particular view of that catechism was not taught. Did the noble Lord say that in Anglican schools managed by Low Churchmen the religious teaching was adequate?

LORD H. CECIL: Yes.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Then, if it were adequate, why was not the religious teaching in the Board schools adequate? Did the noble Lord mean by "adequate teaching" the teaching of all the doctrines of his own faith? If he did, there were several Anglican schools where the whole doctrines of his faith were not taught, and where, consequently, the teaching was not adequate. He was glad that his honourable Friend the Member for the Scotland Division had made the speech he had delivered, because it showed that it was not absolutely impossible for those on that side of the House to co-operate with those honourable Members who shared his views in regard to a proper system of education. Nonconformists were treated worse than Mahomedans and Pagans were treated in India.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Yes. There was not a single State school in India where a Mahomedan was excluded from becoming a teacher on account of his faith. And yet there were thousands of schools in this country, maintained by the State, where Nonconformist children were precluded from being teachers on account of their faith. The honourable Member for Stroud tried to establish the fact that a kind of control was exercised over the Voluntary State-aided schools in this country. He said it was practi-

cally the same kind of control as that exercised by the Imperial Government over the police and over other local affairs where there were grants-in-aid. That argument was dealt with by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, but there was one point not touched upon to which he wished to direct attention in supplement to what had been said by the right honourable Gentleman. The local authorities could not appoint a chief constable except with the consent of the Home Office, but the managers of Voluntary schools which received grants-in-aid could appoint not only head teachers, but all teachers, without the sanction of the Education Department, or even submitting their names to the Department. So that his honourable Friend's case in regard to the police utterly broke down. The Vice-President of the Council, in the remarkable speech which he had delivered that night, tried to cast the responsibility for some things that occurred last year on the President of the Council, and washed his hands of all that had been done. He was not surprised at it, but there were two or three things for which the right honourable Gentleman was responsible, and which showed the character of the administration during the last three or four years. There was, for instance, the glaring case of the Camberwell site. He would remind the Committee of the facts. The London School Board introduced into Parliament a Provisional Order in order to secure sites for building new schools in different parts of London. Amongst others there was a site at Camberwell, where at present there was a kind of ramshackle concern for a school. It was deemed advisable, in the interests of the children, that there should be a new commodious school, properly equipped. It was necessary to have the sanction of the Education Department for all the sites, and that sanction was obtained. Proper notice was given to all the owners of property and to everybody who had a legitimate right to object, and no objection was made. The Provisional Order passed the First and Second Reading in the House of Lords, through Committee, and the Third Reading, and was then brought down to the House of Commons, where it passed the First and Second Reading, and was sent to Committee. The solicitor to the London

School Board was present in Committee; no objection was raised, either by the Education Department or by anybody else; and the solicitor left the Committee. Something happened, however, immediately afterwards. The Camberwell site was struck out of the Provisional Order without even giving notice to the representative of the School Board. On inquiry it was found that the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich had, a little confabulation with the Vice-President of the Council, and the Camberwell site was struck out as the result of that confabulation. That was stated in the course of debate in the House, and the Vice-President did not contradict it. That was a very fair illustration of the way in which the School Boards were treated by the Education Department since the honourable Gentleman came into office. Of course, the real reason why the Camberwell site was struck out of the Provisional Order was that there was an Anglican school not far removed from the new site, and the noble Lord, who was the representative of the Voluntary schools, knew well that if a commodious School Board school were set up within a few hundred yards of the Voluntary school the parents would send their children to the new school rather than to the Voluntary school. Why did not the friends of the Voluntary schools act in the usual straightforward way? They had the means of objecting. They had representatives on the School Board, but they did not object. They could have petitioned against the Provisional Order, but that they did not do.

MR. CRIPPS: The inhabitants objected.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: How many inhabitants? He had not the remotest doubt that the clergyman who was manager of the Voluntary school and his colleagues objected; but who were the inhabitants? No grounds were given for striking out the Camberwell site to the School Board or to the House. Both the House of Commons and the London School Board were treated with unmitigated contempt by the Education Department. The whole thing was done purely in the interest of a sect who wished to suppress the School Board school. The Vice-President came down

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to the House and made eloquent and pathetic speeches in the interests of education and the condition of the children of the poor, and one might imagine from these speeches that these were the very things he had most at heart. But when he had an opportunity of showing that he had the interests of education at heart, rather than the interests of any sect in the community, he invariably gave in to the representations of the noble Lords the Members for Rochester and Greenwich, in the interests of a sect. What was true of the Camberwell case was equally true as regarded the case mentioned by the honourable Member for Flint. There was a Conscience Clause for the protection of the children. Five inhabitants of Flint claimed the protection of that clause for their children. It seemed to be a matter of amusement to the right honourable Gentleman that anybody should have religious convictions. He was not surprised; but, after all, the right honourable Gentleman must bear in mind that there were millions of people in this country who did not regard this as a matter of amusement and did not treat it with cynical contempt, and the right honourable Gentleman had no right to do so. Well, these inhabitants claimed the protection of the Conscience Clause on religious grounds, and it was the business of the right honourable Gentleman to administer the law and to grant that protection, but he had not done it. The rector of the parish held these people up to contempt in the parish church, and the right honourable Gentleman said, "Why should he not?"

SIR J. GORST: I did not say that.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Well, what did he say?

SIR J. GORST: I said I had no ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE begged the right honourable Gentleman's pardon. He was perfectly aware that the right honourable Gentleman was not a Bishop. He was not sure what the right honourable Gentleman was. He was not responsible to the diocese, and if he was not responsible to the House for the Education Department, what on earth

was he responsible for? This gentleman who held these poor people who claimed the protection of the Conscience Clause up to ridicule was not merely rector of the parish of Flint, but was manager of the school.

*MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): Did the parents apply for the protection of the Conscience Clause, and did they fail to obtain it?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that was not the point at all. It was now quite clear that they were getting the answer from the real authority. It was under the direction of a junta of clerical members who managed the Education Department and the Government. They were gradually getting to know, and he was glad the right honourable Gentleman had accepted the responsibility. This man denounced those four men from his pulpit, and he was the manager of the schools and the correspondent. To that school the right honourable Gentleman was paying £1,100 annually, while the total subscribed by the Anglicans themselves was only £110. Therefore the right honourable Gentleman was more responsible for the management than the vicar, for he was the man who was keeping the school going. Had he no control over the correspondence, or was there any remonstrance brought to bear? The rector of the parish was not in the same position as the minister of a free church, for he was a State official representing the National Church. But this man was not satisfied with merely denouncing the poor people from the altar, but he attempted to drive them from their employment and out of the district. He went and complained to their employers, and that was what he called intimidation. There was one case in which the agent of an insurance company claimed free schooling, and he got an answer which was perfectly insolent. He thought the correspondent of that school ought to be rebuked for his conduct to men who had a perfect right to communicate with him. The correspondent communicated with the Chairman of the Prudential Company, by whom this agent was employed, and informed him that one of the company's agents in Flint was taking a violent part in political affairs, when all that this man had done was to claim free

schooling for his child. Therefore, this correspondent to whom the right honourable Gentleman paid £1,000 a year tried to obtain the dismissal of a man for doing that which he had a right to do according to the law of the land. The right honourable Gentleman said he was not exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction; but he was there to administer the law with regard to education, and if he did not do that he had no right to be representing education in that House, and as long as he allowed himself to be intimidated by Members on the opposite side of the House he was not a fit person to administer the law of the land. Those two cases he had mentioned the right honourable Gentleman was personally responsible for. Did he ask the opinion of the President of the Council with regard to the Camberwell site, or did he simply consult the Member for Greenwich?

SIR J. GORST: I do not say that I did not.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE maintained that what was said then was that the objection came before the matter had passed in Committee. The right honourable Gentleman knew perfectly well that when the Bill was unopposed it did not take a quarter of an hour, and so the right honourable Gentleman had no time to communicate with the President of the Council. He wished to know, did he communicate with him?

SIR J. GORST: I did.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said they knew now who was responsible. The case of the pupil teachers which had been referred to was another instance of the same kind. He thought it was necessary in the interests of education that something should be done to improve the pupil teachers, but that was not all. It was the recommendation of the Departmental Committee appointed by the present Government in 1896, upon which there was not a single politician, for it was composed of educational experts. The majority of them were supporters of the Voluntary schools, and they unanimously recommended eight important recommendations for the improvement and strengthening of the

pupil teacher system. In those recommendations the Committee emphatically stated their conviction that the whole system of training uneducated young persons was economically wasteful and educationally unsatisfactory and even dangerous to the teachers and the taught in equal measure. That Report had been on the Table of this House for a year, and nothing had been done. Under the fourth of those recommendations there were seven or eight sub-heads, and the Government selected two of those sub-heads which they had put into the Code. That was the attempt of this weak-kneed Government to satisfy the supporters of the right honourable Gentleman. No doubt the reason why only two of those sub-heads had been carried out was that pressure had been brought to bear by the gentlemen under whose direction the right honourable Gentleman was managing the Department, and without whose consent he had not taken any steps. He asked the right honourable Gentleman to point out anything he had done to carry out those great opinions which he had embodied in articles, in reviews, and in speeches both inside and outside of the House of Commons. The only thing he had done was to give a grant to Voluntary schools, and he had never done anything to carry out his own proposals. The right honourable Gentleman admitted that the system was a bad one, but he instantly succumbed to his supporters, and sacrificed the interests of education wilfully and knowingly in the interests purely and simply of his clerical supporters, and he thought they had a right to protest in the name of education. This was no new thing, because there was a Commission in 1888, and the majority of them were supporters of Voluntary schools. That Commission spoke in equally scathing terms of the pupil teacher system, but the moment there were signs of opposition he immediately withdrew from carrying out any reform. They had a right to protest against such conduct, for education appeared to be a purely secondary thing in the view of the Department. The Education Department appeared to have only one object, and that was to keep up insanitary schools, and drive the children into buildings which were not fit for their education.

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Mr. MIDDLEMORE (Birmingham, N.), in a maiden speech, said he thought the Debate on the educational question had already been somewhat protracted and he should not have ventured to address the House had he not felt very strongly indeed with regard to the question of elementary education. The Vote before the Committee made no suitable provision for those 60,000 children who left school every year between the age of 11 and 12 years and became half-timers. He supposed that it made no provision because it could not legally do so. But it was so easy to make such provision by raising the age. It was utterly wasteful from an educational point of view to leave the age as it was, and he confessed that it would be with much bitterness of heart and some misgivings if he supported the Vote unless some substantial hope was given for the future. He could not understand why the Government took no action in regard to this matter, which they all admitted was so pressing. The Vice-President equally desired to do so and he was in favour of raising the age, and the House itself by a majority of five to one agreed to that principle. The school boards of the country—with the exception of some rate-affrighted rural boards, which he supposed would soon be snuffed out—were in favour of it, for over and over again they had sent up memorials upon this very subject. The trades unions were in favour of making this provision for the children, and he had been told that a great trades union at Manchester very much regretted the resolution which it passed in an opposite sense, for he thought that no one would admit that the interests of human creatures should be treated as of less importance than the articles which they manufactured. Such subordination was impious, and was it not by this subordination that Germany was gradually encroaching on our area of trade? By permitting the withdrawal of children from the school, his impression was—and he had had a very large experience—that a large number of those half-timers played truant from their work and got on to the streets. The consequence was that their knowledge faded, discipline disappeared and there was a tremendous educational waste. In this way many of the children under the present system were

deprived of their rightful chance in life, and a perpetual disability was inflicted upon them. It seemed to him that the clever boys and girls would in after life derive very little advantage over the stupid boys and girls under the present system. He knew that in the main he was speaking to a convinced audience, but there was one section which he should like to ask a very simple question. He understood there were 600 Members of this House. Now, if each Member had a child deprived of advantages equivalent to that which the children would enjoy and which those half-timers would enjoy if they had been kept at school, what would they not give to secure their children those advantages? The raising of the age at which children could leave school was certain to come before very long. Although he was a young Member of the House, and was speaking under the difficulty of not making his utterances heard, yet he had interfered because he thought it was his duty to do so. He earnestly asked the Government before this Vote was passed to give the Committee some statement of their views and intentions in regard to this question of the half-timers.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University) sympathised with the complaint made by the honourable Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool, and quite agreed that this subject was one which was well worthy of consideration. No doubt it was a considerable hardship, for it was surely unfair for those who paid for the Voluntary schools to be called upon a second time to pay the School Board rate. He thought it would be fair that subscription to Voluntary schools should be allowed to count as against the School Board rate. The points touched on by previous speakers were, no doubt, very important, but they did not touch the educational aspect of the Vote. In some respects he submitted that the present state of things was very unsatisfactory. There had been, no doubt, for many years past a steady improvement in their school buildings, and both the number of schools and the number of scholars attending them were increasing. But on the other hand, when they came to look at the education given in those schools he thought that there were some points

on which they must feel that there was still a great deal left to be desired. In round numbers the total of their schools under the Department was 24,000, and out of that number in 13,500 English was taught, and in 17,000 geography was taught. He would like to ask his right honourable Friend, and the Committee generally, whether it was quite a satisfactory state of things that there should be 6,000 of those schools receiving grants from the Government which were classified as efficient elementary schools in which no geography was taught. Surely geography ought to be a *sine qua non*, and ought to be taught in every school in the country. When we find that there are 6,000 schools in which geography is not taught, or in which they are not presented for examination in that subject, surely they must feel that there was much room for improvement. There was another subject to which he thought they should really have paid more attention. When he looked to these statistics regarding the teaching of history he found that out of these 24,000 schools there were only 6,000 in which the children were presented for examination in history as a class subject, although no doubt there was a certain amount of elementary history taught incidentally by means of reading, but so far as any systematic teaching of history was concerned there were only 6,000 schools in which the children were presented for examination in that subject. He submitted that this fact constituted a very serious state of things, for every English child ought to have some instruction in the history of their country. Lastly, he would allude to the subject of elementary science. Perhaps upon this subject he should not carry members of the Committee so much with him because with regard to science they might have an impression that there was something abstruse about it which required some certain amount of profound knowledge. But when they came to elementary science, which, however, merely meant some elementary knowledge of the laws of nature and the world in which they lived, the numbers were only 2,100. No doubt a certain number of the more advanced children were also taking specific subjects, but they were very few when compared with the total number. He be-

lieved that this was mainly due to the rule that children could only be presented for examination in two class subjects. Consequently, as most of the schools took geography and English, history and elementary science were practically excluded. Indeed, as regarded science, the numbers were even less than last year. He wished to earnestly call the attention of the Vice-President to the matter, and hoped he would take steps to remedy the evil, and terminate the virtual exclusion of history and elementary science from their national schools.

Mr. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.) said that the right honourable Baronet had referred to some subjects which, in his opinion, ought to be more largely taught in schools than was now the case. But so long as the present system obtained of assessing the grant for the work of schools at so much for reading, writing, and arithmetic, and so much more for singing, needlework, English, and geography, and so on, there could not be that freedom which there ought to be within the walls of the school to teach the subjects to which the right honourable Baronet had referred. He hoped that during the coming year the Education Department would set themselves to formulate a plan for assessing the grant on the system known as the *block system* which prevailed in Scotland, whereby the school received the grant not in proportion to the number of subjects taken, but in proportion to the general efficiency of the work done. If that reform could be brought about, very much could be done in the direction which the right honourable Baronet had suggested. But an even more difficult obstacle in the way of teaching those subjects was the limited and irregular attendance of great numbers of children who worked either before or after their attendance at school, or during half-time. And then, what could they do in schools where the teaching staff consisted mainly of children themselves, as was the case in many of the rural schools? The age at which children were allowed to leave school was far too early, but the reception which the Bill for raising the age limit by six months had met with at the hands of the Government rendered its prospects of being passed very slight indeed. Unless they could come to some

agreement with regard to the horrible theological dissensions in education which would enable them to give from the State or locality to all schools the means of affording efficient education, it was idle and worse than useless to claim that every school should have teaching in geography, history, and elementary science. The efficiency of the schools depended upon the supply of teachers, and the way to secure that supply was to develop the pupil teacher system. In particular the supply of teachers in the rural districts was falling off, and would continue to fall off unless the conditions of the teaching profession were made more attractive. It was to secure this end that the two modifications and improvements were recently made in the Code which were withdrawn by the Government because of the opposition of the noble Lord the Member for Rochester, the honourable Member for North Hants, and other honourable Members whose action would do incalculable damage to the cause of the Voluntary schools which they were seeking to assist. He hoped the Vice-President would do something in the matter of the dismissal of teachers of Voluntary and also Board schools for all sorts of capricious and unjustifiable reasons, and would see that the teachers were not robbed of any portion of the pensions to which they were entitled by reason of such capricious dismissal.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): On such an occasion as this, which is one of the most important in the course of the Parliamentary Session, when we are dealing with the Education Estimates, we are considering how we are investing money which is to bear fruit in an active, useful, energetic generation 30 years hence. We are sowing the ground and we ought to be satisfied with the quality of the seed we put in, and from which, 30 years hence, we expect to reap our harvest. Therefore, no pains can be too great for the House to devote to these great educational questions. The misfortune of these Debates is that, by some unhappy law, they appear almost always to run in the channel of purely theological controversy. I am bound to say it is impossible for anyone altogether to avoid this, although, at the same time, the less we spend of the brief intervals allotted to education on such controversy

the better it will be. I should have liked to have had from the Vice-President some information regarding the present state of subscriptions to the Voluntary schools which the right honourable Gentleman has told us suddenly dropped last year. The Education Estimates appear to go on gradually increasing, and this year we are spending considerably over £11,000,000, in addition to what has been spent in elementary schools by the Science and Art Department. That is a sum largely in excess of what was considered adequate 10 years ago, and I do not suppose that any of us will grudge it if we think we are getting value for it. But what are the results we obtain for this enormous expenditure? The Vice-President told us last year that both elementary and Board schools in the purely rural districts are, as a rule, inefficient; that they fall short of a reasonable standard of efficiency, such as that which is maintained by the rural schools of Scotland, Germany, Switzerland, and the United States. What, then, are the causes which contribute to this lamentable result in the case of the English schools? The cause is attributable in the first place to the early age at which children are allowed to leave school. In Germany and Switzerland children remain at school until they are 13, but in a large proportion of the English rural districts they cease their school work at the age of 11. That is a serious drawback to efficiency. Another cause of inefficiency is the irregularity of attendance, or an attendance which is ineffective and unprofitable, because the children have probably risen at five in the morning and have done four or five hours' work before coming to school at 9 o'clock, and cannot therefore possibly bring an active and intelligent attention to bear upon their school work. I do not think it is going too far to say that 250,000 school children are doing work in this way, which interferes with their getting proper teaching. Then there is the question of ineffective teaching. The teachers in the elementary schools are not so well trained, and relatively to the expenses of living are not so well paid, and altogether are not so efficient as the teachers of Germany and Switzerland. The inefficiency is largely due to the employment of pupil teachers, a practice which does not prevail in the

educational system of any other country. It is impossible for the children who are employed as pupil teachers to give proper instruction either in general knowledge or in the mode of teaching, because their time is occupied and their faculties are strained by the efforts to teach other children. But the evil does not end there. The mind of the pupil teacher is so dwarfed and stunted at the very time when it should be expanding that he has but a bad chance of becoming a good principal teacher. Most of the faults of the teachers in the elementary schools are due to the fact that, beginning as pupil teachers, they begin to teach too soon and contract bad habits, or at least a defective style of teaching, which they find it impossible to drop. Quite recently I had the privilege of meeting a high educational authority from America, who had come to this country for the purpose of inspecting elementary schools, and when I asked that gentleman what struck him most in our system of elementary education, he said:—

"Two things. First, your elementary schools are plebeian; they are looked down upon; they are not schools like the schools of Germany and Switzerland, in which no one, whatever his social rank, is above teaching; but the great defect of your system is that you rely too much upon pupil teachers, and if you want to bring up your schools to the level of the schools in Germany and Switzerland you must get rid of the pupil teachers."

We are accustomed to complain of the clergy of the Church of England in connection with the elementary schools, but I believe, although there is a small section who attach more importance to sectarian control and teaching, the great majority of the clergy are sincerely interested in education, and certainly are more interested in education than any other class in the rural districts. I have heard from clergymen statements about education which were of the greatest value and interest, and which show that, principally owing to the system of pupil teachers, the state of education in rural districts is thoroughly unsatisfactory. A great deal of the expense which is incurred on behalf of technical education fails as a matter of fact to obtain its due results, because boys and girls do not obtain in the elementary schools that mental discipline and that sound foundation of general knowledge upon

which technical education can alone be worked to do any real good. A sound system of elementary education is necessary to make the children worthy members of the commonwealth, in the sense that they should have some aptitude for pleasure, and some intellectual interest which will carry their lives beyond the daily, dull routine of toil and fit them for the enjoyment of something better than a night in a beer-house. These defects in our educational system must be removed if we are to sustain the country in its competition with other lands, and none of these defects are without remedy. It is not so much a question of more money being wanted, except inasmuch as the salary of the teachers must be raised, but the money which is now spent might be spent to much better purpose. I believe that nearly all educationists are agreed that the things to which I am referring ought to be done, and the reasons that they are not being done is because of the inefficiency of the Education Department, which does not enforce the law. There are many reforms that we cannot get. The Department is not doing its duty, and it is not strong enough to compel the enforcement of the law. If it is not strong enough, then, of course, it ought to be strengthened. Now, what is the cause of the inefficiency of the Education Department? The Vice-President has told us to-night that it is due to the fact that he is only Vice-President of the Council. We all respect the great ability of the President of the Council, who has a thorough grasp of the educational question, but he has disappointed us in not infusing more energy and breadth of view into the Education Department. The Vice-President told us to-night what he conceives his position to be.

SIR J. GORST: No, no; I did not say what I conceived my position to be. I said what the Order in Council had laid down as my position.

MR. BRYCE: That amounts to the same thing, because I presume that the Vice-President is a law-abiding man. He had explained in that precise manner what his position is in order to explain the position which he has taken up with regard to educational questions

Mr. Bryce.

which have come before this House. What is his position, as the right honourable Gentleman himself defines it? It is that he was merely to be the mouth-piece of the Lord President of the Council, or perhaps I ought to say the Government. We in this House cannot get at the Lord President of the Council. We only know him as a Member of the Cabinet. The Vice-President, therefore, I suppose, is not ever to be taken as giving us his own view, but only the views of the Cabinet. When we hear the Vice-President we must take it, I suppose, that we are not hearing any views which come from his own knowledge, and which have the weight of his own knowledge and experience. His own knowledge is entirely suppressed, and the weight of his own experience is entirely excluded. We are listening merely to the views which he is compelled by his superiors to express, and we are not to assume that those views had any relation whatever to the the views which he holds himself. We are therefore in this position, that when this very important question of education arises in the House, the House is entirely deprived of that guidance which an experienced and able Minister ought to give it. The right honourable Gentleman the Vice-President feels himself debarred by his official position from giving us the light which is blazing in his own mind, because that light is not the light which shines upon the Cabinet, but it is only the light of a subordinate official. That does not appear to create a very satisfactory position. The right honourable Gentleman is not the skipper, he is not even the pilot, he is merely the boatswain of the Educational ship who repeats the order which somebody else gives. And, apparently, that position is to continue, and while it does continue there is very little use in our arguing educational questions here, because when we have convinced the Vice-President we can get no further. When we address our arguments to the First Lord of the Treasury and other occupants of that Bench, those Gentlemen are able to tell us, and tell us truly, that they are not conversant with the details, and therefore cannot answer them, and we are not aware as to whether we are making the slightest impression upon them. That is the position to which this great Department

has been reduced, and I am tempted to inquire why it is that the Government have adopted this very peculiar policy. I can only suppose that there is some secret influence which controls and guides the Cabinet in educational matters which is not that of the Lord President, judging from what we know of his opinions, and certainly not that of the Vice-President, because whenever he lifts the veil from a small corner of his mind we clearly perceive that it is not the mind of the Government. I will not speculate upon what that secret influence is which so controls the Cabinet; but I would venture to say one thing, and that is, that it is an influence which thinks more of sectarianism than education, because all the educational policy that we have had from the Government, as distinct from that of the Education Department, *per se*, is sectarian in the first instance, and only in the second is educational. I believe that influence—I will not call it a clique—has very little or no support in the country. It is an influence which is not so strong in the country as the Government believes, and I rather fancy that in two or three years the Government may have a rude awakening on the subject. It is a great mistake to assume that with the sole exception of the Roman Catholics parents did not care about the religious education of their children. They do desire that their children should be taught something in the way of religious education, but not that they should be taught something which they themselves do not believe. They are perfectly satisfied that their children should receive the sort of religious education that the Board schools give. Of that I could give some curious instances where there are schools side by side with Church schools which give no religious teaching at all, but a little Bible reading without comment. It has been found upon inquiry that though Church schools are actually accessible, fully one-half, or at any rate a large proportion, of the scholars at the unsectarian schools were the children of Church parents. Church of England parents having an opportunity of sending their children to a school where they could receive this dogmatic religious teaching preferred to send them to a school where there was none. Those who desire that distinctive and dogmatic

instruction should be given are pursuing a phantom. They were gaining nothing for themselves. I believe that dogmatic instruction is producing no permanent effect on the minds of the children, and that these conscientious and zealous efforts to bring up children in the tenets of any particular Church are wasted. The only instruction that does any good to the children, and tells upon their minds and characters and make them better Christians and better citizens is instruction that could be given, without a single word of dogma, based on the Scriptures alone. I will not dwell upon the injustice involved in the system which has been shown by other speakers. I will only say that I believe it is because we are distracted by these controversial questions that we do not devote our minds simply and absolutely to the question of getting the best education, and I am afraid that so long as sectarianism is allowed to dominate the policy of the Government, so long would educational questions have to take the second place. I believe that many faults of administration, loss to the intellectual life of the country, and loss to its material progress are traceable to the fact that their minds were being diverted from purely educational questions, and until the Education Department is rescued from the influence which has latterly controlled it, until it is allowed to give a genuine educational policy, those evils will remain.

*MR. TALBOT thought that nobody could complain of the way in which the subject had been treated by the right honourable Gentleman who had just sat down, who had raised the whole tenour of the Debate; but he could not help fancying that even he had been unable to realise the religious difficulty which pursued the subject. There was no doubt that there was a deep-seated religious conviction in the minds of a great number of persons outside the House, who had just as much objection to the banishment from the schools of the religious teaching which they valued as others had to the introduction of dogmas which they detested. The right honourable Gentleman who had just sat down made one single remark which showed that he had a strange want of grasp of the situation.

Mr. Bryce.

He said religious instruction could be given without a single word of dogma, based on the Scriptures alone.

MR. BRYCE said he meant to say without a single word which involved a dogmatic formula, because we might debate for ever on what is a dogma, but we know what a formula is.

*MR. TALBOT said there was not a single line in the New Testament which did not contain a dogma, and when he was told they were to have undogmatic religion, he did not believe such a thing existed. The existence of the Deity was dogmatic; the doctrine of the Trinity was dogmatic. Unless they wanted to banish the whole of the Christian faith from the elementary schools they could not banish dogma. There was a strong conviction among many Members on his side of the House, and among many people outside the House, that, as education without religion was vain, so religion without dogma was impossible. Passing from that part of the question he felt himself obliged to accept the challenge which had been thrown out, and he desired to say a very few words in answer to it. From what the honourable Member for Nottingham had said it would seem as if he thought that the supporters of the Voluntary schools had always resisted any attempt to increase and improve the educational efficiency of our national system of education. As a matter of fact, it had been their constant aim, both by the sacrifice of time and money, to improve, as far as they could, the educational as well as the religious efficiency of their schools. He himself should certainly support, as he had supported, the Bill for raising the age of half-timers, and he desired to see it passed into law. The House must remember it had to deal with a nation which, after all, was not like the nations of the Continent: the people of this country had very peculiar views, they were quite ready to be assisted and encouraged in the proper treatment of the children, but they would not stand being driven or compelled more than was absolutely necessary to do this or that in regard to their children. The statistics to which they had listened revealed an amount of child misery which was positively appalling; but

this was caused apparently, not by cruel employers or want of inspectors, but by the parents themselves, who subjected their children to this misery and barbarous treatment in order to get their earnings. It presented a very sad picture to him, and he could not conceive anything more painful. Yet it must be remembered that the people who employed their children in this inhuman manner were electors to whom they had given the vote. What they had got to do was to convince the conscience of the people that education was desirable and that they must not treat their children in this way. There was one thing he desired to say with regard to the pupil teachers. He trusted that nothing that had been said would be allowed to bring discredit on the pupil teacher system. The Report of the Committee as to the pupil teacher system showed that the supply suitable for pupil teachers was seriously deficient, at any rate, in the case of boys, and that, to quote the words of the Report, "the supply of pupil teachers for rural schools was a matter of increasing urgency," not because of the economic condition of the schools, but "rather because some of the best material for the teaching profession had been drawn from this source," and it was hoped that increased grants and larger stipends would offer some inducement to the brighter children to become pupil teachers. He trusted that honourable Members would try and put aside the matters which divided them so unfortunately on this subject, and would endeavour to make our education more efficient, as well as to prevent the horrible slavery which had been described.

Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire) said that in his opinion the hopeless defect in the whole system was the far too early age at which the children left school. It was perfectly hopeless to extend the curriculum unless there was made compulsory a longer period of school life. It was absolutely impossible to cram into a child of 12 years of age a knowledge of English history and physical science in addition to the other subjects he was expected to learn unless he could continue at school a few years longer, and no good result would be obtained until such a course was made obligatory; but in the rural districts work must be done

in the summer time, and in place of raising the age at which children might leave school to 12, they should allow children to leave school at the age of 11 in the six summer months on condition that they should attend school in the six winter months for two years longer. That was the principle adopted in Prussia and in many parts of the United States and Switzerland with much success, and he believed it would be of permanent benefit to the children. On the occasion of the last Debate on education he called attention to the reasons why Nonconformists were so greatly opposed to the religious teaching given in the Voluntary schools. The great mass of the Nonconformists of this country believed that all the essential truths of Christianity were contained in the Scriptures. They were all in favour of the Scriptural education of the children, but they strongly objected to the semi-Roman teaching now given in State-supported schools. They objected to their children being required to attend Mass and to adore the images of the Virgin Mary and the saints. According to the Vice-President of the Department, they could not prevent the setting up of these images.

SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan) asked the honourable Member if he could mention a single case of this being done in a Church of England school.

MR. S. SMITH said he had heard suggestions of something very near the practice, and he felt sure nothing but exposure in the House prevented these things from being done. As the law stood there was nothing to prevent the ritualistic clergy recommending the adoration of the Virgin Mary and the saints, putting up these images in the schools, and requiring children to venerate them. He appealed to the right honourable Gentleman to say whether such things were prevented by the Education Department or not. He had received a mass of material during the last year or two showing that the Voluntary schools were being used to teach the children Roman practices and to unprotestantise the country. There were instances in different parts of the country of Protestant children being compelled by the Department to attend Roman Catholic schools. He believed

that nine-tenths of the parents, if appealed to, would say that they required the religious teaching of their children confined to the Scriptures.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: Order, order! How does the honourable Gentleman connect these matters with the Education Department?

MR. S. SMITH said he connected them in this way. The Education Department presided over the schools of the country, and those schools received very large grants. Then, as to the position of teachers. Nonconformist teachers were becoming extremely few, and a few days ago he received a letter from the headmaster of a Voluntary school—

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) submitted, on a point of order, that the Votes were not charged with expenses of religious teaching, which, whatever it might be, were supplied from voluntary sources. If the honourable Member continued in that direction it would necessitate a reply.

MR. LEWIS asked whether religious teaching was not part of the school curriculum?

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: That may be, but the Education Department has no control over the religious teaching in Church of England, Roman Catholic, or other denominational schools, and therefore I do not think the remarks are pertinent to the Vote.

***MR. GODDARD** (Ipswich): On a point of order, Sir, I submit that the Department has the right to withhold the grant.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: The honourable Member is mistaken. The Department has no power to withhold the grant if it is earned according to the conditions of the Act.

MR. S. SMITH bowed to the Chairman's ruling. Proceeding, he desired to ask the Vice-President of the Council whether the Liverpool School Board was in order in teaching a catechism in the Board schools. He was under the impression that all catechisms of a distinctly religious kind were forbidden

Mr. S. Smith.

in Board schools. So far as he knew, no such catechism had ever been taught previously. No doubt it was a catechism prepared by the Free Church Conference, and personally he quite agreed with every question and answer in it. Indeed, it might be used as a basis of Christian agreement. Nevertheless it was a departure from the spirit and intention of the Education Act.

SIR J. GORST said there had been no new departure in the policy of the Department. Denominational catechisms were forbidden. He had not seen the book, but, judging from the description which the honourable Member had given, he should say that the catechism was not denominational.

MR. S. SMITH said he understood that that was the excuse made for teaching the catechism, but he feared its introduction into Board schools might produce serious consequences and break up the national system of education. He very much feared that the final result of the present controversy would be that 30 years hence we should have drifted into a system of purely secular education. It had been said that the Conscience Clause was quite sufficient to protect the children against any unfairness. He had, however, received a letter from a country parson a few days ago, in which he said that he had never known it to be used. The whole country was being brought far below the educational level of the advanced nations of the world to meet sectarian prejudices, and sooner or later we should suffer greatly in consequence. We should not have badly-staffed, insanitary schools all over the country if it had not been necessary to meet the demands of sectarians. We were getting poor value for the enormous sum of £11,000,000 sterling we were spending on elementary education, and sectarian jealousies would never be swept away until we had a Government in power strong enough to set them aside.

SIR F. S. POWELL said the Liverpool catechism, to which the honourable Member had referred, had been approved by distinguished members of the Nonconformist bodies, and such distinguished Churchmen as Canon Gore, and he should not be acting in accordance with his own feelings if he did not

express his opinion as to the great results which must follow from that most remarkable and almost historical composition. His honourable Friend who spoke from the opposite Bench a few moments ago commented upon the preference of parents for Board schools. His experience had led him to an opposite conclusion. He had found many cases where the National school had been crowded while the Board school hard by was not filled. He believed that the reason was that the parents of England placed more confidence in the National schools than in the Board schools. Reference had been made to the inferior condition of the Voluntary schools in country districts. The fact was, it was universally allowed—they would find it in Report after Report—that the condition of the Board schools in the country districts was eminently unsatisfactory. On the other hand, the average clergyman was anxious to promote the education of his people, and dedicated to his parishioners the benefit of the culture he had acquired. Coming to the question of technical schools, he remarked that in connection with the borough which he had the honour to represent he was associated with a work to build a technical school at a cost of not less than £30,000. In Lancashire and Yorkshire also much had been done in the establishment of technical schools, and it was within his knowledge that great disappointment had been felt by the necessity of teaching in those schools mere elements instead of the higher branches. He believed the consciousness of this great defect in the educational machinery would do much towards its removal. As a member of the Schools Association in the diocese of Ripon he wished to bear his testimony to the great benefit derived from the Act passed by the Government a year or two since. He thought there was one great defect in the Education Debate in the House, and that was that honourable Members did not seem sufficiently appreciative of the improvement going on. As regarded the association in the diocese of Ripon, they had been doing all they could to give effect to the Act and to take advantage of every opportunity offered them, and he rejoiced to find that great success had attended their efforts. The schools had greatly improved in apparatus, general equipment, and sanitary details, greatly

altering the appearance and raising the tone. The salaries of the teachers had been improved, and he had reason to believe that they would be able to give a still further impetus to the work of education. Money, however, was by no means the main point. The Church schools in the diocese had been brought into harmonious co-operation, and were no longer living isolated lives. With regard to the question of pupil teachers, he said the present system was far from perfect, and great improvements were required. He was perfectly sure that if the Government in some day of great financial prosperity gave more money to the schools for the teaching of pupil teachers, the present state of affairs would be in a large measure improved. Meanwhile, it was a great satisfaction to know that, owing to the system of central classes, better opportunities were given for the instruction of pupil teachers.

After the usual interval, Mr. GRANT LAWSON (Yorkshire, Thirsk) took the Chair.

*MR. GODDARD (Ipswich) wished to address himself to the subject of the grievances of Nonconformists, particularly in the rural districts. He must admit that the strange speech of the right honourable Gentleman the Vice-President of the Council had somewhat dismayed him. The right honourable Gentleman was in office in the House, and yet apparently he was not in power. He had spoken, but was not able to act; he had given promises of action, or rather, one ought to say, bearing in mind the interpretation of the Colonial Secretary, he had made proposals of action, which had been simply over-ridden, overthrown, and ultimately withdrawn. The right honourable Gentleman had made a speech the other day in connection with the rural side of the education question, in which he spoke in terms of almost derision about the indifference of the rural population in the matter of both religious and secular education. He said that everyone knew that the greater part of the agricultural labourers were absolutely indifferent as to what was the teaching of their children in either secular or religious subjects, that the greater part of them never went to church or chapel, and that even the religious part of the rural population was extremely

indifferent on the subject of church or chapel. Well, that was an extremely harsh, not to say unjust, judgment, and he did not think it came well from the lips of the right honourable Gentleman, who expected to have his religious services found for him by the State, to criticise those poor people who were not very rich in material wealth, but who were always willing to maintain their own places of worship and to support their own ministers. He wished to draw attention to the method of distributing the grants-in-aid under the Act of 1897. It had been proved by the Returns that the contention made on that side of the House, that the money would go rather to the relief of subscribers than to increased efficiency of the Voluntary schools, was fully justified. The right honourable Gentleman, in answer to a Question the other night, said that there had been a very considerable diminution in the subscriptions to these-called Voluntary schools amounting to £77,927. That was a very serious falling off, but when they came to look at it from the point of view of the subscriptions per head of the scholars in average attendance, the diminution was more apparent. In 1894 the subscriptions to Voluntary schools were 6s. 6½d. per head; in 1895 they rose to 6s. 9d. per head, and in 1896 to 6s. 9½d., and then, possibly with the shadow of coming legislation on the minds of the subscribers, they fell in 1897 to 6s. 8½d., and last year they were only 6s. 1d. per head of the scholars in average attendance. None of them forgot that when the Education Measure of 1897 was under consideration the words "due regard to efficiency" were introduced into the Bill. But it seemed to him that efficiency was still to seek in those schools. If they looked at the Returns as to "warned schools" they would find that out of 30 such schools 28 were Voluntary schools. Again, if they looked at the Returns in regard to associated schools under the Act of 1897, they confirmed in a remarkable manner the view held on that side of the House, that the grants made by the Treasury had been used, not in levelling up the weak and ill-equipped schools in the rural districts, but rather in warding off the healthy action of public control and opinion in school management. The proportion of the grant-in-aid was fixed by the Department at 5s. 9d.

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for town schools, and 3s. 3d. for the country schools. When they came to examine the Returns it was found that these proportions had not only not been maintained, but had been seriously altered in regard to the rural schools. He supposed it would be agreed to by everybody that the town schools were much more able to maintain themselves in an efficient condition than the rural schools, and they had not the same difficulty in maintaining the amount of subscriptions. The tremendous importance of maintaining additional efficiency in the rural schools could scarcely be over-estimated. What he accused the Department of was that they had practically connived at the method of distribution which gave to the towns the plums of the grant and left to the rural districts the merest crumbs. He would quote a few illustrations of this fact. In his own town of Ipswich there was a large parish of St. Mary Stoke, the school in which got from the special grant-in-aid £160. There were 540 scholars in average attendance, and that worked out at 5s. 11d. per scholar. There was another school, St. Peter's, which received £162 5s. 9d. for 505 scholars in average attendance, or 6s. 4d. per head. Now, take the adjacent rural parish of Wherstead—just outside the bounds of Ipswich; that school only got £5 for its 54 scholars, or an average of 1s. 10½d. per head. That showed the method in which the grants had been distributed. Take another rural parish, Belstead, which got £4 10s. for 44 scholars, or an average of 2s. 0½d. per head. Take another town in Suffolk, Lowestoft. St. John's School there got £164; the average number of scholars in attendance was 622, which gave 5s. 3d. per head. But there were two rural parishes adjoining, Mutford and Rushmere, which got £3 18s. for 87 scholars, or 10½d. per head; and Somerleyton, which got £5 10s. for 123 scholars, or 10½d. per head of those in attendance. There was the town of Stowmarket, where the National school got £107 2s. The average attendance of scholars was 398, which worked out 5s. 1d. per head. In the very next parish, Haughley, the grant was £6 18s., which, with 139 scholars in average attendance, worked out 1s. per head. Another parish not far away, Monks Soham, got £1 12s. for 50 scholars, which gave the ridiculous average of 7½d. per head.

Take, again, Yarmouth, St. Peter's School got £305, and the average attendance was 544, or 11s. 2½d. per head. He did not know on what principle the grant was made there. Another Yarmouth parish, St. James's, got £256; the scholars averaged 602, and the rate was 8s. 6d. per head. On the other hand, when they went to the adjoining small villages, where really more money was required to render the schools efficient, the grants were as follows: Tritton, £2 9s., scholars 55, per head 10½d.; Wilby, £2 4s., scholars 50, per head 10½d.; Hevingham, £3 5s., per head 9½d.; and Oulton, £3 15s., 79 scholars, 11½d. per head. Now, the Education Department laid it down as a general principle that the town schools should have 5s. 9d., and rural schools 3s. 3d. per head. The figures, which he had quoted from the official Returns, showed that that proportion had not been maintained, and that the rural schools were being robbed of the grant that they ought to have had. They showed also that the Nonconformists who lived in those rural parishes, and who were compelled to send their children to the Anglican school, which was a sectarian school, because they had no other choice, were being unfairly treated. They did not have the same class of teachers or the same efficiency of school, because they did not get the same amount of money as the town schools. He thought it would be apparent to everybody that those were the very schools that ought to have had a larger grant made to them rather than a smaller grant. He had taken the trouble to see what this meant in some of the counties in his neighbourhood. In Norfolk there were 21 schools, in Suffolk 29, in Essex 22, which had an average attendance of 30 scholars or less. When these figures were compared with the teaching staff employed in those counties, it worked out that in Norfolk 41 per cent. were pupil teachers and teachers under article 68; in Suffolk they were 41 per cent., and in Essex 35 per cent. This showed that in the small rural schools, where Nonconformists were obliged to send their children to the Voluntary Anglican schools, the teaching was of the least efficient character. He thought those figures spoke for themselves. Roughly speaking, he believed he was right in saying that the cost per

head in schools with an average attendance of 60 and under was double that of schools with an attendance of 120 and over. When they looked at the county of Suffolk they would find 36.7 per cent. of the schools had an attendance of 60 and less, and then they would see how badly they were being treated, and what a grievance it was to the Nonconformist who lived in the rural districts to have to send his children to such schools which were left by the Diocesan Association in this very bad state. He could not understand in the address which was made by the right honourable Gentleman why he made no allusion whatever to the Act of 1897, and why he did not explain how it was that those grants were so various in their action. The Education Department, forced on by the Government, had been simply buttressing the denominational system so as to damage the existing School Boards and to prevent new ones being formed. He had authority for stating this in the case of the town of Huddersfield. Under the late Government it was decided to take steps to compel that town to build a new school in an outlying district. But what had happened since this retrograde-policy Government came into office? They had not only ceased to urge that the School Board should build that school, but they had absolutely declined to sanction the new school; and, therefore, they could only conclude that this decision had been come to on account of the interests of the neighbouring Church schools, which feared that their schools would be damaged. He wished to challenge the policy of the Education Department in this matter. They had a reasonable and just cause of complaint in another respect, and it was that Nonconformist children and teachers were unable to get fair play and liberty in regard to school work. He knew of one case which occurred in the county of Suffolk, near Sudbury, where a pupil teacher was dismissed for not attending the parish church. He was further informed that the curate called upon the parents of this pupil teacher and offered to reinstate their daughter if they would all attend the parish church.

SIR J. GORST: Will the honourable Member give me the name of the church and the particulars now, or would he prefer to give them to me privately?

*MR. GODDARD said he would prefer to give them privately. He was told that the parents refused to go to the church because they were Nonconformists. The result was that this young girl was obliged to leave her home and go away from her parents to obtain a pupil teachership elsewhere. He had had one or two cases brought to his notice which showed that there was a great deal of compulsion and tyranny being exercised in regard to Nonconformist pupil teachers in the Voluntary schools, and it would not be difficult to state a large number of cases. They had a right to insist upon fair play. He did not know how far their powers went as to the withdrawal of grants, but surely they must bring some power to bear if such proselytising and sectarian dodges were not abandoned in those schools in the future. Something had been said about the training colleges, which, after all, were more sectarian even than the Voluntary schools. The amount raised by voluntary subscription in the case of the colleges was infinitesimal compared with the amount of public money granted in their support. He thought they ought to take this opportunity to ask the right honourable Gentleman to say whether the time had not come when the sectarian test imposed in these colleges should not be removed. It was nothing short of a scandal that, because the number of those colleges was so limited, and totally inadequate for the accommodation of the young boys and girls who desired to become properly instructed in the duties of their profession, in order to enter those colleges they were oftentimes obliged to become the nominal communicants of the Church of England before they could be really qualified. With regard to the drawing grants he was told that they used to be 2s., 1s. 6d., and 1s. per head, according to whether the work of the scholars was excellent, good, or fair, and he believed that in most of the Board schools the 2s. grant was earned by the superiority of the training which the scholars received, whilst in the Voluntary schools they usually earn the 1s. 6d. and the 1s. grant. What had the Government done in regard to this matter? He understood that they had fixed an average grant of 1s. 9d., and the result was that the Board schools which used to earn the 2s. grant were now losing a large

sum of money which they used to earn by the extra proficiency, while the inferior schools were gaining a considerable addition to their income, and the natural result must follow that the teaching of drawing would suffer because the pecuniary motive for maintaining its efficiency had been removed, and there was no incentive now to attain that proficiency. He wished to ask the right honourable Gentleman to grant a Return of all those Nonconformist teachers who were permitted to teach in the Anglican schools of this country. They had said that they were very often turned out of those schools, and the best way of satisfying the public would be that there should be a Return given of the numbers. He did not wish to detain the Committee at any greater length on those matters, which he thought required to be answered, for it was very remarkable that not a word had been said at all by the Department in regard to them. Many of them were not ashamed to acknowledge that they were Nonconformists, and they had a right to stand up and protest against the way they were treated when the education offered them was so inferior. They did feel that it was their duty to state publicly the very great injustice which had been inflicted upon those who did not agree with the Church of England, and as Nonconformists they could not be blamed for having on that occasion raised this point with the view of upholding the principles which they believed as Free Churchmen, and in resisting that method of dealing with them.

MR. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) said there were one or two points upon which he should like to reply very shortly. It was complained that under the administration of the Voluntary Schools Act the grants were chiefly distributed according to the needs of the schools, and that those needs were judged by the associations themselves. It was perfectly understood at the time when those grants were made that they would be distributed not at so much per head, but according to the varied needs of the schools. It was impossible to judge the various instances which had been brought forward without a full knowledge of the local circumstances, and without a detailed inquiry, which it would be futile

to ask them to undertake. With regard to the administration of those grants, at all events, they had been administered as Parliament intended they should be. He agreed that the present condition of education in the country schools was unsatisfactory, and honourable Members were perfectly justified in saying so. They did not, however, make sufficient allowance for the great physical difficulties in regard to attendance at school which existed in the country districts. But even allowing for those difficulties, he admitted that the attendances were deplorable. In regard to evening continuation schools he thought something might be done to improve rural education in this direction, and if the Department would only draw the attention of the county bodies to their very varied action in dealing with continuation schools, he thought a great deal of good might be done by that action alone. He thought it would be useless to attempt to enforce better attendance by legislation, because they could not get the local authorities to carry it out. They wanted to reform public opinion upon this question, for there was a widespread opinion among the agricultural classes that the education given in primary schools was calculated to unfit the children for a country life. At present what were the subjects taught to the children in the country? Besides the three "R's" there was usually geography and grammar taught. But in the higher standards, however, the children were not taught to apply their knowledge to the facts of their daily life, and their powers of observation were not encouraged, and consequently they did not take a sufficient interest in the local pursuits of the country. A child was apt to leave school crammed with facts and figures and the names of towns and foreign countries, but with no knowledge which enabled him to appreciate more highly the advantages of a country life, or which would make him a more useful dweller and worker in country districts. That was an evil which they might very well confront. There was no doubt that the decreasing population of the rural districts was a very great evil, and they must take care not to aggravate it in any way by their system of education. He wanted the Education Department to consider how they could stimulate in the country

schools, even at the early age at which the children now left the school, branches of knowledge which bore upon agricultural pursuits. They were not even doing in England what was done in Ireland and in other countries. He had drawn attention to the condition of agricultural education in Ireland, where 85,000 pupils had been given instruction in agricultural subjects. He was aware that Ireland was an agricultural country, but it was not more so than many parts of England. In France agricultural subjects had been compulsory in the rural schools for many years past, and this was given to such a degree that the elementary knowledge thus imparted to the children inspired them with a love of country life, and convinced them that agriculture was more remunerative to those who practised it with industry and intelligence than was generally imagined. No doubt it would be said that France is better situated for agriculture, but he thought something more might be done in England if their children were better trained in this respect. There was one great difficulty, and that was, that they had not at present a sufficient number of trained teachers, and no time ought to be lost in seeing that proper facilities were given in the training of children to give them a knowledge of those sciences which bore on agriculture. It ought not to be impossible to provide at some of their training colleges instruction in agricultural science. He thought the South Kensington instruction in agriculture was unsatisfactory, for during the past five years the number of students taking up this subject had fallen from a total of 6,000 in the year 1893 to under 2,000 in 1897. That showed very conclusively that the teaching of this subject was very unsatisfactory, and the elementary science of agriculture should be taught in all our rural schools in preference to some other class subjects. He thought they should adopt some means of providing special teachers, because the whole system of peripatetic teaching had been sadly neglected owing to the isolation of their country schools. The local councils were in a different position, because they could not provide funds for such a purpose to aid teaching in the elementary schools. They could train teachers, but it was not part of their function to deal with their teaching in the day

schools, and they could hardly be blamed for not doing more. He thought the Government grant might be increased for such subjects as cottage gardening, and he was quite sure that if they wanted to strike at the root of the evil and make more satisfactory progress in this matter they would have to make their elementary education more popular among the agricultural population, either by such means as he had suggested or some such alteration as had been suggested by the Vice-President of the Council in lengthening the school age. By doing that he thought they would secure a more regular attendance, and also a better education, than by alterations in the law which were in advance of the opinions of the people.

*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe) said that the Committee were indebted to the Vice-President of the Council for the part of his speech in which he drew attention to some of the defects of our system of popular education. The only regret was that his repeated demonstrations of those defects were not followed by the announcement by the Government of Measures intended to remedy the defects. The right honourable Gentleman had stated that the most serious defects were due to the irregularity of attendance, and to child labour. With respect to irregularity of attendance, his honourable Friend who had just sat down thought that it always would exist in country districts on account of the physical difficulties; but it was remarkable that some of the most extraordinary results in foreign countries as to attendance were where the physical difficulties were the greatest. Even in our own country, as, for instance, in some parishes in Westmorland, where there is a very heavy rainfall and a wet climate, and where long distances had to be travelled by the children, the attendance was remarkably good. He did not think, then, we could attribute the irregularity in attendance to physical difficulties. He had never been able to discover entirely what was the main cause of regularity in attendance in such parishes as he had mentioned. He thought it was almost entirely due to a succession of two or three excellent teachers. Where there were good teachers,

Mr. Hobhouse.

there was an influence on the parents which brought out a strong sense of the value of education, and their duty to their children in seeing to the regularity of their attendance at school. When once they had established that sense in the country districts, however great the physical difficulties, they would continue to have the satisfactory phenomenon of regular attendance. In the country generally, the average attendance was 81.66 per cent. for last year; but if they looked at the Blue Book, they would find that in a very considerable number of school districts the attendance was a great deal better than that. That meant, however, that in half of the school districts in the country the attendance was worse than 81 per cent., and that it was shockingly low over a large part of the country. When they had found means for improving the administration of compulsion by magistrates, and for producing a better sentiment in the minds of the parents, they would have gone a long way in removing the obstructions to the usefulness of our education system. He thought the right honourable Gentleman had rendered great service by calling attention so prominently to the terrible way in which some of our little children were worked before school, between morning and afternoon school, and after school. There were also many children on the school register who were sent to work when they ought to be at school. The figures were very striking, and there was ample evidence that they were not complete. He had no doubt that his honourable Friend did not go beyond the mark when he stated that there were 250,000 children engaged in labour. The honourable Member for Stroud seemed to question some of the facts as to child labour, but he was afraid that it would be difficult for the honourable Gentleman to shake them. Indeed, he suspected that they were rather under than over stated. At all events, there was sufficient evidence of the great injury to the cause of education by the over-straining of thousands of young children, and their exposure to moral risks in employments in the streets. He was not sure that they were sufficiently impressed in the House since the compulsory law was passed in 1870 with a full

sense of their responsibility to the children to whom they applied that law. They were bound to do their best for these children, but how could they do their best when they allowed them to attend school so irregularly, to leave school so early, and even, when at school, permit them to engage in every kind of employment. He wished to direct the attention of the House to a point not yet mentioned in the Debate. There was one class of children in our schools who could not be effectively taught and trained by the existing system, or upon the scale of grants now given. He meant defective, or feeble-minded children. A Departmental Committee was appointed in December 1896 by the Lord President of the Council to make inquiry into this subject. That Committee reported in January last year, and the Government had promised legislation on that Report. As the Session was now getting on, he desired the Vice-President to give a fuller answer than he had done earlier in the week to a question as to the legislative intentions of the Government on this subject. He was very anxious for the early introduction of the Bill. He did not suppose it would prove a contentious Measure, but it was a matter of pressing importance and necessity. What did the Departmental Committee report? They estimated that the defective or feeble-minded children were 1 per cent. of the school population in elementary schools, or 42,000 between 7 and 14 years of age in England and Wales. This estimate was the result of much experience and inquiry at home and abroad. The Departmental Committee did not include in that number either mere backward children, or idiots, or imbeciles, but—

“Only those children who are not imbecile, and who cannot properly be taught in the ordinary elementary schools by ordinary methods.”

Under sub-head 1 of the Vote under discussion, they were asked to vote £18,600 for blind and deaf children under the Act of 1893. That law followed on a Report from the Royal Commission on the blind, the deaf, and dumb, issued in 1889. That Commission recommended—

“That with regard to feeble-minded children, they should be separated from ordinary scholars in public elementary schools, in order

that they might receive special instruction, and that the attention of the school authorities should be particularly directed towards this object.”

The attention of the school authorities was directed to the subject, but it was impossible out of the resources of the smaller school boards to establish such special classes. But in London, and in Leicester, the school boards had started such classes, followed by Birmingham, Bradford, Brighton, Bristol, Nottingham, and Plymouth. The cost of teaching such children as these was nearly double the cost of teaching ordinary children, and the only grant which was earned by the children in special classes was that which was given for infants. The reason for this additional expense was that it was absolutely necessary they should be taught in small classes by specially trained teachers, and under medical supervision. Now, he did not think it was necessary to argue with the right honourable Gentleman the Vice-President of the Council, because he believed that would be pushing at an open door. But he might mention to the Committee that this would be productive expenditure, because experience showed that these feeble-minded and defective children, from the weakness of intellect and will, and the absence of training, lapsed more easily than others as they grew older into vice or crime, and recruited largely the ranks of the vicious and criminal population. Experience also showed that, by means of these special classes, feeble-minded children could be educated and made intelligent and fit for the battle of life. Indeed, many of the children need only spend a year or two in the special classes, and could then be drafted into the ordinary classes. He ventured to urge on the Vice-President, and he was sure he would be supported by Members on both sides of the House, that there should be prompt legislation on this matter. He had only one other word to say, and that was, that they were carrying on the discussion under exceptional disadvantages. This was the first time in his recollection since he had been in the House in which they were called upon to discuss the Educational Estimates without having

received the annual Report of the Department. Before the Report stage of this Vote was reached, it would be very desirable to have that Report.

*Mr. ERNEST GRAY (West Ham, N.) said he was more than surprised to find that the greater part of the evening had elapsed without anyone having discussed a social problem of extreme importance in connection with this question of education. It was remarkable that in England they had paid so little attention to the training of feeble-minded children with defective intellects, because few people could realise the harm done to the community at large owing to the neglect of such children who might be reclaimed, and who ought to be prevented, if not reclaimed, from doing harm to society during the remainder of their lives. Experience had shown them that a large number of those poor children might be reclaimed if they were separated from the ordinary school work and entrusted to specially trained teachers. Their retention in the ordinary school was harmful to other children, for they lent themselves to mischief and vice very readily, and they were a drag upon the ordinary work of elementary school teachers. He was glad to hear that the Government were contemplating legislation on this matter, although he did not know when the Bill would be introduced. Not being a contentious subject he thought it might have been introduced at an earlier stage, because all parties were cognisant of this evil. He expressed his cordial appreciation of the high educational tone which had pervaded the speeches from the Front Benches, and he only wished that a similar attitude had been more generally adopted in regard to what was certainly one of the most important problems with which they had to deal. Many people were tempted to sneer at their public elementary schools, but they should remember that they were dealing with the training of those who would command and control

that House, not in 30 years time, but in some six or eight years. He could not conceive of anything of greater importance, and he was sorry that they were still wasting their time in dealing with such comparatively trivial matters as that of the Flint comedy. They had had that comedy now upon the stage so long that it would not draw a good house, and the skilful stage manager would have removed it long ago. After all it was somewhat satisfactory to know that only the Camberwell and Flint cases remained to be settled. He hoped those cases would take their exit that evening, for no substantial grievance had been made out. With regard to the startling figures brought before the House by the Vice-President, he was amazed that the Member for Stroud had thrown doubt upon the accuracy of the Return which had been quoted. The School Board in his own borough held that those instances were all of such an alarming character that they felt they ought to make them public. In their Report they devoted some few pages to instances of this nature, and he was afraid that the Committee did not fully realise what all this meant. In London a child who went on a milk round started at six o'clock in the morning, and he had to be at school at nine o'clock. Over and over again that child went into the school at nine o'clock drenched to the very skin without a dry article on him, and he had to sit down to a three hours' course of teaching. That was cruel to the child, to say nothing as to the injury to his education. This was not always the fault of the parent, for the tradesman who employed the child very often kept him until the moment the school was opening. Very often a younger child of the same family would bring the poor little worker's breakfast just as the school door was opening, and he would have to consume it in the school. The result of this system was that such children never knew one hour of real child life, for it was crushed out of them; and it was not always owing to the

poverty of the parents, for he had known many cases in his own personal experience where the families did not require such support. Very often the contract made for the child's services was a very fair one, but it was systematically broken either by the employer or his men, and he desired to know if nothing could be done to stop this practice. He thought very much might be done if it were not for the folly of the school attendance authorities, who would not enforce the law as it stood, and the objections of the magistrates or their inability to cope with the number of cases under their notice. Those children engaged in that kind of employment earned a trifle under one farthing an hour, and for that all educational work goes to complete rack and ruin, and not infrequently the end of it is the death of the child, or a serious illness from which the child recovers with difficulty. Was the money upon education wisely spent when it was allowed to be frittered away in this manner? He was more and more convinced that a very large amount of the money so readily voted by Parliament for education was being wasted owing to the utter folly of allowing leakages of this character. The subject was a very serious and patent one, and he most earnestly pressed upon the Government the necessity of carefully examining the returns which they had secured, and coming to a conclusion as to what was the best form in which to deal with the subject, and, if necessary, legislative proposals should be placed before the House of Commons for the protection of these children, in order that some prospects of a little gleam of sunshine in the life of those children might be secured, for they had been aptly described as white slaves. Turn where they would they would come back to this one fundamental difficulty, that until they got the schools of the country adequately financed, and until the Voluntary schools had the same financial treatment as the Board schools of the country, it

was useless to hope for any educational progress. A number of persons in the country required this education, and they ought to be allowed to have it, and as both sides were equally desirous to give it, why should they go on year after year discussing those comparatively small questions of disagreement which were keeping the work of education back? Surely they could devise some scheme upon which a common agreement could be arrived at. His Essex colleague, the Agricultural Cassandra, was, he thought, alone in believing that a little education was quite good enough for the children in agricultural constituencies. His own opinion was that too much education could not be given to children in rural districts, but children should not be crammed with facts and figures to be forgotten in after life. Education was for training the faculties and developing the intelligence, and he did not care what subject was selected to produce those results. They had nothing yet, either in the large towns or the rural districts, approaching a satisfactory system of education. It was not that all Board Schools or all Voluntary schools were bad. The fact was that in the large towns some of the schools were of the worst description, and in the rural districts some of the schools were of the best. He could name a Voluntary school in the county of Surrey admirably equipped and splendidly managed, which was entirely dependent on the charity of two ladies. He contended that no school doing the work of the nation should be dependent on the charity of private individuals. He knew very well that some Voluntary schools were admirably managed and were all that could be desired in that respect, but others left much to be desired. He regretted very much that in the Bill of 1897 Parliament did not make a bargain with the Voluntary schools and say that, in return for the money they received, they should be prepared for a modification in their management. He listened with

the keenest interest and sympathy to the speech made by the honourable Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool. It was a pathetic picture, but true and accurate in all its details; and the same picture might be drawn with regard to thousands of Anglican schools. He ventured to put it to the Government whether the time had not arrived when they might not refer the great question of the means of adequately supporting the whole of the schools of the country, and placing them under proper management, to some Committee of Inquiry holding different political views, which might come to an agreement and afterwards make a strong and united representation to Her Majesty's Government. Whether that was done by the present Government or by a succeeding Government, he was confident that the country would not much longer tolerate the inferiority of the position they were bound to occupy owing to the lack of financial support for the poorest of their schools. To his mind it was to the interests of the children they had to look. He cared little about the management or the class of teaching employed, provided that the children were adequately trained to perform the functions they would have to discharge in after life. The honourable Member for South-East Essex suggested that the children in the agricultural districts were being fitted for the part they were to play in life. Many people appeared to imagine that agricultural children were rooted to the soil after the manner of turnips. With the advent of machinery and the large amount of land which was devoted to grazing purposes the demand for labour in agricultural districts was nothing like what it was 20 years ago, and consequently many of the children trained in rural schools were compelled to go into the large towns. Were they to be handicapped in the race of life by their earlier training? Even in agricultural constituencies the one thing which parents were keenest on was that their children should have a better start in life than they themselves had,

Mr. Ernest Gray.

and they looked upon any proposal to make the rural schools of the country thoroughly efficient as one of the worthiest proposals any Government could bring forward. Too often the rural schools were in every respect ill-suited for their purpose. They were ill-lighted, ill-ventilated, and badly equipped, and should not be devoted to educational purposes at all. Then the staff often consisted of a mistress, with an assistant or monitress, and one or two pupil teachers. He had never been able to comprehend the position of many Members with regard to religious education. If there was one subject which required careful handling, it was the question of religious teaching. They might put an incompetent teacher to teach the number of capes round the coast, but when an incompetent teacher taught the sacred truths of religion to young minds the results were painful and startling. He should be sorry to see the religious lesson banished, but that lesson should be given by the head teacher. In many of the schools at present a child was taken from the fourth standard to teach Scripture to children in the first standard. It was a perfect farce to pretend that that was religious teaching. Both religious and secular teaching was bound to suffer on account of it, and yet when a proposal to remove some of the pupil teachers and entrust the sacred work of religious teaching to adults the House of Commons said "No; relegate religious teaching to children of 15 or 16 years of age." Many a clergyman would regret that step, and would look with pain at the delay in arriving at a satisfactory solution of that great question. Everyone who knew anything of the state of affairs in the country knew how large a part was taken by Church of England clergymen, both in the management of Voluntary schools and as chairmen of School Boards, and he believed the great bulk of them were silently discontented that a reasonable proposal was not put before the House of Commons. He himself was so pain-

fully conscious of the importance of the subject and so deeply sensible of the terribly inferior position English schools occupied, that he could not refrain from impressing on the Government the necessity of referring the matter to some competent tribunal through which an agreement might be arrived at between the two great parties in the matter to get rid of the smaller School Boards, often inefficient though sometimes excellent, to widen the area of responsibility, to attract better men to the work of education, and to place the Voluntary schools under thoroughly competent management. He had been much interested during the last few months in watching the result where parents and ratepayers were associated with vicars and churchwardens in the management of a Voluntary school. The amount of subscriptions had been doubled, and greater confidence was shown owing to the wide range of persons directly interested. It had been stated that working men were not fit to manage Voluntary schools, but surely the men who managed friendly societies and had built up co-operative societies were qualified to manage Voluntary schools. He agreed that further money should not be given to the Voluntary schools until their management had been revised; but why should they delay? Why should child after child go out into the world unequipped while they were wrangling. He could not understand it, and he ventured to press on the Government the urgent necessity for action, and he hoped the Debate would have the effect of compelling the Government to deal with the question.

MR. H. ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.) said he had listened with great pleasure and satisfaction to the speech of the honourable Member for West Ham, who spoke with the knowledge of an expert. There was one remark of the honourable Member to which he, however, could not agree, and that was the statement that it was not of any great importance that the agricultural

districts were being rapidly depopulated. He felt that that was one of the greatest social problems of the day, and, unless something were done to make elementary education in the agricultural districts more interesting, the Education Department would have failed in one of the most important of their duties. He had listened with great interest to the remarkable statement of the Vice-President of the Council with reference to child labour, and he agreed with other honourable Members that sufficient importance had not been attached to the alarming facts which had been disclosed. He desired to direct the attention of the Vice-President to a matter of administration, which he had previously brought before the Committee. In a large number of districts a great deal of friction was caused, a great deal of public money was wasted, and much injury was done to the cause of education by having two schools—a Board and a Voluntary school—established in a small rural district. He would give a concrete instance. In a parish in his own constituency there were two schools. The population increased, and it was found that the accommodation provided by one of them—the Board school—was not sufficient. The School Board applied to the Education Department, but the Department replied that they could not sanction the plans for the increased accommodation required, because that course would be illegal as long as there was a single place vacant in the Church school. He ought to mention that the children in the parish were overwhelmingly Nonconformist, and the education given in the Church school was inferior to that given in the Board school. In fact, the former school had been “warned” last year. Was it not obvious that every Nonconformist parent would be desirous of sending his children to the Board school, not only on religious, but also on educational grounds? He entirely agreed that they could not make any real progress until they realised the absolute necessity of making every elementary school fully efficient in every sense of

the word. It had been said that they could not hope to look forward, at any rate for many years, to an agreement on the question. He was not over-optimistic, but he hoped to see the day when they could discuss the Education Vote without the introduction of sectarian and political considerations, which had done so much to mar the fruits of the discussions of the question in the past. The Education Act of 1897, which gave increased grants to Voluntary schools, had been the means of greatly aggravating the discord between the two classes of schools throughout the country, and especially in Wales. He was reading the other day in the "Manchester Guardian" a letter written by the headmaster of a Board school near Denbigh, complaining bitterly of what he called clerical influence being brought to bear on the children in his school to induce them to attend the Church school. That was going on in Wales to his own personal knowledge, and as long as it continued he could not see how friction could be avoided. There was one other matter he desired to bring before the Committee. Intermediate education had been established in Wales, and they were justly proud of the remarkable results which had been achieved; but they would have been still more remarkable had the system of elementary education been more efficient. One of the great obstacles in the path of true progress in enabling the intermediate schools to fully fulfil the design for which they were established was the inefficient general standard of education throughout the country. He would like to press the Vice-President to grant a return of all Nonconformist pupil teachers engaged in Church of England schools. It seemed to him that if they had such information it might be the means of removing a great many of the difficulties which stood in the way of a satisfactory solution.

SIR J. GORST: The Debate has been maintained at so high a level in

Mr. H. Roberts.

respect of the real educational aspect of the question that I am quite sorry to recall to the recollection of the Committee the few speeches with which the discussion began, but I suppose it would be scarcely courteous to the honourable Members who made those speeches if I did not allude to them. The honourable and learned Member for West Fife was troubled with what he thought were my sentiments on the position of the Vice-President. The honourable Member said that he came into the House very late; but I am afraid that the honourable Member came into the House so late as not to be aware that I said nothing of my own with respect to the functions of my office, but that I was reading to the Committee from an Order in Council, which was, of course, not mine. Then the honourable Member for Carnarvon and the honourable Member for the Flint Boroughs made what they called an attack upon the Education Department for its partial administration of the law. The honourable Member for Carnarvon said that he was going to arraign me on a number of concrete cases, which ultimately reduced themselves to three. The first case was the old dispute about striking out last Session the Cuthill Road site from the London School Board Bill. That subject has already done duty in this House, but the attack on the Education Department was aggravated on the present occasion by the insinuation that on this particular matter I had not acted under the direction of my noble Friend the Lord President, but that I had acted under the direction of the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich—a statement made without any foundation whatever, and which is the exact contrary of what is the fact of the case. The second concrete instance in which the conduct of the Department was arraigned was the Flint case. That case has done duty twice this Session. It was a lamentable case, but the only fault which the Education Department committed was in not allowing itself to be drawn into a local squabble. Then the

Education Department has been blamed because some Amendments in regard to pupil teachers had been cut out of the Code. It was not our fault that those Amendments had been struck out. It was the House of Commons which, by a considerable majority, carried an Address to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to disallow those articles in the Code. I made a speech in which I stated as clearly as I could the reasons why those articles were put in, but the speeches made on the other side by my honourable Friend the Member for Hampshire, and other honourable Members, appeared so to convince the House of the desirability of striking out those clauses that the Motion was carried. It was not carried by me, but by the House of Commons; and for the Education Department to be blamed because the House of Commons carried a Resolution against the Department seems to me a very great injustice.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who authorised the right honourable Gentleman to make the concession?

SIR J. GORST: I did not make a concession at all. My noble Friend and I had no course but to submit to the judgment of the House of Commons.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The right honourable Gentleman never supported his own Code.

SIR J. GORST: I made a speech to the House of Commons in which I explained to the House the grounds upon which those articles had been placed in the Code. It has been said by some people that that speech was very convincing; but however that may be, a majority of the House of Commons thought fit to pass the Resolution, and they must accept the responsibility of their action. Passing from that subject, there are a few things which have arisen in the

course of the Debate which I ought to notice. In the first place, may I say that I entirely agree with almost every word of the admirable speech of the honourable Member for North Birmingham, and I hope that the views he expressed, when they come to be considered, may commend themselves to the attention of the House and the country. With regard to what was said by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for the University of London, the subjects which are taken as class subjects by the schools are not under the control of the Department; they depend on the will of the management, and, if elementary science has been taken by fewer schools during the past year, that is not the fault of the Department, but is the choice of the managers of the schools in question. But there is a fact which will a good deal explain that falling off. It is that the object lessons have been much more frequent in the schools than formerly. I am told that, although the number of Departments which took elementary science decreased by something under 500, the number of schools which took object lessons has increased by 13,500. I do not think, therefore, that the falling off in the interests of the schools in elementary science is so great as the right honourable Baronet was inclined to suppose. Then the honourable Member for Nottingham asked whether anything would be done with respect to the arbitrary dismissal of teachers. I am sorry to say cases have occurred of very unfair and unjust dismissal of teachers, and I am quite sure some action will have to be taken to protect them against it. It was long contemplated by my predecessor, and the predecessor of the Lord President, that some kind of relief in this direction should be given to teachers, but neither they nor their advisers have ever yet been able to devise a satisfactory plan. But I have every reason to suppose that as time goes on some method will be discovered by which cases of wrongful and unjust dismissal, which, though they have occurred, I believe have been very

few in number, will be met. As to what my right honourable Friend the Member for Aberdeen said in his very admirable speech, I agree with most of it; but I do not agree with that part of his speech in which he charged me with not expressing my opinions sufficiently open in this House. I heard that with surprise, because my own Friends on this side of the House have generally found fault with me for being too outspoken. I can only suppose that in my extreme anxiety to correct the one error I was led into I have fallen into the other. However, I will certainly endeavour in the future to speak to the House with that candour with which I have always tried to speak. I have never tried to conceal my opinions, and I never will. Then the honourable Member for Flintshire has asked me about the Liverpool catechism. Well, that is a very difficult question, and I should be very sorry to express an opinion on a catechism without having an opportunity of consultation with my noble Friend the Lord President. The law is that no catechism shall be brought into schools which is distinctive of any religious denomination. I have not seen the catechism to which the honourable Member referred, and I know nothing of it except what I learned from the description he gave of it. He said it was a catechism with which he agreed, and with which, he supposed, many honourable Members on this side of the House would agree. If that is so, I should certainly think it cannot be a catechism distinctive of any religious denomination. In one of the ordinary organs of public opinion I saw that one of the items of this catechism is what is known as your duty to your neighbour in the Church Catechism. I have always thought that your duty to your neighbour, as set out in the Church Catechism, is a description of the moral law to which even Socrates would have agreed, and if I am right in thinking that there is nothing distinctive of the Church of England in that catechism, that would be a perfectly proper thing to teach a child; but whether teaching

children by catechism is the best way of instilling doctrines into their minds or not is a matter for educational experts. With the liberality which always distinguishes the administration of the Education Department, we should rather leave a question of that kind to the School Board or the managers of the Voluntary school in question. All we have to do is to see that the catechism taught is not distinctive of any religious creed, and there our duty ends. The honourable Member for Ipswich entered into considerable detail about the administration of the Voluntary Schools Act, but his criticisms were fully answered by my honourable Friend the Member for Somerset. It was intended that the sums given to different schools should show very great difference, and that some schools should get a great deal of assistance if they were necessitous, and others which had not the same need of assistance actually none at all. It would be quite impossible to answer particular cases unless we possessed local knowledge; but if the honourable Member desires further information upon the question, I hope he will give me notice, and I will endeavour to supply it. Then the honourable Member quoted cases of tyranny over teachers because of their Nonconformity. It is not of the slightest use to quote such cases unless names and places are given. All I can say is that I have tried over and over again to get at concrete cases of these things, and I have not succeeded in getting them. The Committee will remember there was a Debate initiated by the honourable and learned Member for Carnarvon upon this grievance of Nonconformists being unable to become pupil teachers in Church schools. I said then, in a most marked manner, that I challenged anybody to produce concrete cases. The result of that challenge was that two cases were submitted to me. One was three or four years old, and the other was a comparatively recent one. I investigated both those cases, and in neither of them was there any foundation for saying that the

fact of the pupil teacher being a Non-conformist had anything whatever to do with admission or non-admission. I can recall the particulars of one of the cases. A girl applied for a situation as assistant teacher, and she said that if she could only get the situation she would be most happy to be confirmed and conform to the Church of England. She was put under instruction with a view to confirmation, but before the time for her to be confirmed she got a better situation elsewhere. Then the honourable Member for Ipswich spoke of the Department showing extreme hostility to Board schools by averaging the drawing grants, and so giving less to the excellent Board schools and more to the inferior Voluntary schools. The object of what was done was to put an end to what is called payment by results, to give a uniform grant for drawing, as it is the desire of the Department to give uniform grants for all purposes. I can assure the honourable Member that nobody in the Department ever dreamt of such a thing as injuring Board schools in favour of Voluntary schools. The drawing grants were transferred from the Science and Art Department, in which the system of payment by results had prevailed, to the Education Department, which years ago abandoned the system of payment by results, and the change took place in order to bring the drawing grants in accordance with all other grants administered by the Department. The last question was whether I would give a return of the number of Nonconformist pupil teachers in the schools. I have said that the Education Department has no power to ask any teacher—head teacher, assistant teacher, or pupil teacher—in its employment what his or her religious persuasion is. It is totally contrary to the whole practice of the Department to inquire into the religious tendency of the teachers who are employed in these schools. It would be a serious breach of the universal practice of the Department if such a departure as that were to take place, and one

which I think would give rise to a good deal of obloquy and a good deal of inconvenience. Now, I wish to say that I entirely agree with the observations made by the honourable Member for Somerset about the improvement of agricultural education. As I have said in the House before, I think the rural schools have suffered from the system which is applicable to town schools being thrust upon them without sufficient attention being paid to their peculiar wants and conditions, and I shall be most ready to entertain any plan proposed. I may say that the attention of the Education Department has been given to this matter, and the desirability suggested of giving a more practical turn to the education of rural children—to give them something like they have in France, where boys and girls are taught by actual demonstration the principles of the constituents of the soil, the principles of manures, the kind of animals employed in agricultural labour, and as to the crops grown and the diseases and pests to which they are subject; and where the girls are taught as to the care of the farm yard, the mode of keeping the house, the mode of managing poultry, and everything of that kind. I think it would be an extremely good thing if something of that kind were introduced here. The honourable Baronet the Member for the Clitheroe Division has asked me whether we could postpone the Report of the Vote, because the Report of the Department has not yet been produced. I am told that in recent years the Report never has been produced before the Vote has been taken. What has been produced, and what has been produced this year, is the statistics. I will answer the question of the honourable Member for Denbigh on Monday. I need now only refer to the appeal made to me by the honourable Members for Clitheroe and West Ham, and my Friend who interrupted me about defective children. A Bill is in course of preparation, and shall be proceeded with with reasonable expe-

dition. It is founded on the Blind and Deaf Children Act. Perhaps it will be more convenient that it should be introduced by the Lord President in another place, but as far as the Education Department is concerned, we are quite conscious of the importance of that Bill being passed into law, and we will use every diligence to secure its passing.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): The Vice-President of the Council has very truly said that a high tone has been preserved in this Debate. I have seldom listened to an educational Debate in which the speeches were more deserving the attention and admiration of the Committee. There was the speech of the honourable Member for Nottingham, and that of the honourable Member for Aberdeen, than which I never heard a more luminous, well-informed, or wiser exposition of educational policy; and there was the speech of the honourable Member for West Ham, and, I believe, although I had not the advantage of hearing it, a speech by the new Member for one of the Divisions of Birmingham. That speech the Vice-President specially selected for eulogy, and I think he did so in obedience to the peculiar topsy-turvy humour which distinguishes him, because I am informed that the honourable Baronet expressed doubts whether he ought not properly to vote for the Amendment, because the right honourable Gentleman had failed to do as much as he expected in the interests of education. Something has been said in deprecation of the introduction of religious controversy into this discussion. I deprecate it as much as anyone, but I deprecate more the existence of causes which make it necessary to deal with educational subjects from that point of view. So long as the educational arrangements of England and Wales stand as they are, with the peculiar position of the Church schools and the monopoly they enjoy in many large parts of the country in many parishes, and the sense of inequality

and injustice on that ground which undoubtedly prevails in many Nonconformist communities, we must always expect to have cases of the sort that have been dwelt upon. The only case to which I shall refer is the case we discussed 10 days ago, whether a certain alteration of the Code was summarily thrown overboard in obedience to a demand of the supporters of the clerical view of the Church schools. The right honourable Gentleman gave, in his usual style, a strange account of that proceeding. He said he had stated the reasons why the Department introduced the change in the Code, and it was the House of Commons, forsooth, that enforced upon him the excision of those new provisions from the Code. But who are the majority in the House of Commons? What was the line taken by the Government in that Division? The right honourable Gentleman himself took no part in the Division. He was content to introduce, in what he believed to be—and was informed by his technical advisers to be—the interests of the efficiency of these schools, this change. He was quite content to throw it away and walk out of the House—although he is the responsible person in the matter as far as we are concerned—at the bidding, not of the House of Commons, but of Her Majesty's Government, because before the House of Commons expressed an opinion he informed us that the Government had come to the conclusion that they must postpone it or remove it from the Code. The explanation of the right honourable Gentleman is inconsistent with the fact. But I will only say, on the whole case, that undoubtedly an immense impediment would be cleared away for the establishment of a more perfect system of education if all schools were maintained in this country for educational purposes and educational purposes only, and not for the support of any particular denomination. The right honourable Member for Aberdeen spoke about technical education, on which we are spending so much money, and pointed out that the success of

technical education does not depend on the technical school arrangements, but on the excellence of the foundation of education given in the elementary schools and the provision made for maintaining the education there given to the children. I now come to a matter not so much educational as constitutional, which the right honourable Gentleman has himself raised. It is the question of the right honourable Gentleman's own position. The right honourable Gentleman will believe of me, and of everybody in the Committee, that there is no want whatever of personal respect for him. We all know that he is qualified by his powers of mind for the fulfilment of the duties of almost any position to which he may aspire in the official world. It is not our fault that he is not in a position where his powers of independent action might have full play. His views on education are well known; we approve of those views; but he has the strangest idea of his position. He gives no effect to his views, and yet he is content to still go on occupying his position. Frankly, I must say the right honourable Gentleman shows a strange lack of regard for his own personal dignity in so doing. It is, in my opinion, unworthy of him to continue in an office for which he shows his contempt whenever he speaks of it. We all know that when he speaks of the Department and of the President of the Council there is a hardly disguised ridicule conveyed to the House. Now, the right honourable Gentleman thought he cleared himself by reading the Order in Council which defines his duties—that he is to assist the Lord President and to act for him in his absence. He says that he has, to the best of his abilities, discharged those duties. The right honourable Gentleman knows perfectly well that he has duties not defined in the Order in Council relative to his Department, to the House of Commons, and to the taxpayers of the country. The right honourable Gentleman knows quite well that an Under Secretary of State has, in most cases,

very few positive defined duties assigned to him, and that when the Under Secretary represents his Department in this House he is expected to speak straightly and frankly the views of that Department, and stand by those views as if they were his own. The right honourable Gentleman will forgive me for saying that the difficulty that he finds himself in in his Department may be due quite as much to himself as to any part of the organisation of his Department. We remember, not long ago, when the right honourable Gentleman was Under Secretary for India, he made a speech in reference to Manipur which was own brother to the speeches he has now delivered as Vice-President of the Council. If we were only to be amused by the wit and the ingenuity of the right honourable Gentleman the position would be pleasing indeed and harmless enough, but I confess that so light a view can hardly be taken of it. It is almost an affront to the House of Commons and an injury to the country that the great interests of education should be so treated as to be made a field for this somewhat undignified sport. Serious questions are raised without being adequately dealt with, and while we wish nothing but prosperity and advancement to the right honourable Gentleman in his career, it would seem surely to be time that some better arrangement for the exercise of his abilities were made than one which involves administrative discredit and a failure in the respect due not only to this Assembly, but to the great and sacred cause on which the future of education and the future and well-being of this country so largely depend.

Question put—

"That Item A (Salaries) be reduced by £1,000, in respect of the Salary of the Vice-President of the Council."—(*Mr. Herbert Lewis.*)

The Committee divided:—Ayes 71; Noes 155.—(Division List No. 107.)

AYES.

Allison, Robert Andrew
 Asher, Alexander
 Ashton, Thomas Gair
 Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
 Baker, Sir John
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.)
 Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
 Billson, Alfred
 Bolton, Thomas Dolling
 Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
 Burt, Thomas
 Caldwell, James
 Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
 Causton, Richard Knight
 Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Douglas, Charles M. (Lanark)
 Duckworth, James
 Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)
 Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
 Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
 Grey, Sir Edward (Berwick)
 Gurdon, Sir William Brampton

Harwood, George
 Hayne, Rt. Hn. Charles Seale-
 Hemphill, Rt. Hn. Charles H.
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Hutton, Alfred E. (Morley)
 Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
 Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.
 Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb'land)
 Lloyd-George, David
 Lyell, Sir Leonard
 McArthur, William (Cornwall)
 McKenna, Reginald
 Mellor, Rt. Hn. J. W. (Yorks.)
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
 Morgan, W. Pritchard (Merthyr)
 Morley, Charles (Breconshire)
 Morley, Rt. Hn. John (Montrose)
 Moss, Samuel
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Nussey, Thomas Willans
 Paulton, James Mellor
 Pirie, Duncan V.
 Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
 Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
 Rickett, J. Compton

Roberts, John H. (Denbigha.)
 Scott, Chas. Prestwich (Leigh)
 Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
 Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
 Smith, Samuel (Flint)
 Soames, Arthur Wellesley
 Souttar, Robinson
 Spicer, Albert
 Strachey, Edward
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
 Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
 Thomas, Alfd. (Glamorgan, E.)
 Thomas, David Alfd. (Merthyr)
 Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Ure, Alexander
 Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams, John Carvell (Notts.)
 Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
 Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Mr. Herbert Lewis and Mr.
 Goddard.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
 Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
 Balcarras, Lord
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manc'r)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. Gerald W. (Leeds)
 Banbury, Frederick George
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Barton, Dunbar Plunket
 Bathurst, Hn. Allen Benjamin
 Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
 Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
 Bethell, Commander
 Blundell, Colonel Henry
 Bond, Edward
 Brassey, Albert
 Brodick, Rt. Hon. St. John
 Brymer, William Ernest
 Butcher, John George
 Carlile, William Walter
 Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lincs.)
 Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
 Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, East)
 Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
 Chaloner, Capt. R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
 Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r)
 Charrington, Spencer
 Cochrane, Hn. Thos. H. A. E.
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
 Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Cooke, C. W. Radcliffe (Heref'd)
 Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
 Cornwallis, Fiennes Stanley W.
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cubitt, Hon. Henry
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalbiac, Col. Philip Hugh
 Dalkeith, Earl of
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Daly, James
 Davenport, W. Bromley
 Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
 Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers

Doxford, William Theodore
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
 Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
 Fellows, Hn. Ailwyn Edward
 Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manc'r)
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
 Fisher, William Hayes
 Fitzgerald, Sir Rbt. Penrose-
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Forster, Henry William
 Garfit, William
 Gedge, Sydney
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hon. John Edward
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Gretton, John
 Greville, Hon. Ronald
 Halsey, Thomas Frederick
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord George
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hardy, Laurence
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Hobhouse, Henry
 Howorth, Sir Henry Hoyle
 Jackson, Rt. Hn. Wm. Lawies
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Kemp, George
 Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
 Kenyon-Slaney, Col. William
 Lawrence, Sir E. Durning (Corn)
 Lawrence, Wm. F. (Liverpool)
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
 Lecky, Rt. Hn. William Edw. H.
 Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
 Leighton, Stanley
 Llewellyn, Evan H. (Somerset)
 Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Liverp'l)
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller

Lowe, Francis William
 Lowles, John
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
 Macaleese, Daniel
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdona, John Cumming
 Maclure, Sir John Wm.
 McArthur, Charles (Liverpool)
 McCalmont, H. L. B. (Cambs.)
 Martin, Richard Biddulph
 Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Milbank, Sir Powlett Chas. J.
 More, R. Jasper (Shropshire)
 Morrell, George Herbert
 Morton, Arthur H. A. (Deptf'd)
 Mount, William George
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. Graham (Bute)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford
 Pease, Herb't Pike (Darlington)
 Penn, John
 Phillpotts, Captain Arthur
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Purvis, Robert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Richards, Henry Charles
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Robinson, Brooke
 Round, James
 Royds, Clement Molyneux
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Ryder, John Herbert Dudley
 Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renfrew)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Stanley, Edward J. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stewart, Sir Mark J. M. Taggart

Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
 Stock, James Henry
 Strutt, Hn. Charles Hedley
 Sturt, Hn. Humphry Napier
 Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Uni.)
 Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray
 Valentia, Viscount

Wallace, Robert (Edinburgh)
 Ward, Hn. Robert A. (Crewe)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of Wight)
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Whitmore, Charles Algernon
 Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
 Williams, Joseph Powell (Birm.)
 Willox, Sir John Archibald

Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wylie, Alexander
 Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
 Young, Commander (Berks, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE desired to have the Vote held over in order to have the opportunity of calling attention to the important question of training colleges. He moved to report progress.

Question put—

“That the Question be now put.”

The Committee divided:—Ayes 153;
 Noes 63.—(Division List No. 108.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
 Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
 Balcarres, Lord
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch.)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
 Banbury, Frederick George
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Barton, Dunbar Plunket
 Bathurst, Hn. Allen Benj.
 Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
 Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
 Bethell, Commander
 Blundell, Colonel Henry
 Bond, Edward
 Brassey, Albert
 Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
 Brymer, William Ernest
 Butcher, John George
 Carlile, William Walter
 Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
 Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbys.)
 Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, E.)
 Cecil, Lord H. (Greenwich)
 Chaloner, Capt. R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Bir.)
 Chamberlain, J. A. (Worc'r)
 Charrington, Spencer
 Cochrane, Hn. T. H. A. E.
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
 Cook, Fred. L. (Lambeth)
 Cooke, C. W. R. (Heref'd)
 Corbett, A. C. (Glasgow)
 Cornwallis, Fiennes S. W.
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cubitt, Hon. Henry
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalbiac, Colonel Philip H.
 Dalkeith, Earl of
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Daly, James
 Davenport, W. Bromley-
 Dickson-Poynder, Sir J. P.
 Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers
 Doxford, William Theodore
 Duncombe, Hon. H. V.
 Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
 Ferguson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Man.)
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir R. Bannatyne
 Fisher, William Hayes
 Fitzgerald, Sir R. Penrose-

Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Forster, Henry William
 Garfit, William
 Gedge, Sydney
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hon. John Edward
 Gorat, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Gretton, John
 Greville, Hon. Ronald
 Halsey, Thomas Frederick
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord G.
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hardy, Laurence
 Hare, Thomas Leigh
 Hobhouse, Henry
 Howarth, Sir Henry Hoyle
 Jackson, Rt. Hn. W. Lawies
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Kemp, George
 Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir J. H.
 Kenyon-Slaney, Col. Wm.
 Lawrence, Sir E. D. (Corn.)
 Lawrence, W. F. (Liverpool)
 Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks)
 Lecky, Rt. Hn. W. E. H.
 Leigh-Bennett, Hy. Currie
 Leighton, Stanley
 Llewellyn, E. H. (Som'set)
 Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Long, Rt. Hn. W. (Liverpool)
 Lopes, Hy. Yarde Buller
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowles, John
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdonia, John Cumming
 Maclure, Sir John Wm.
 McArthur, Chas. (Liverpool)
 McCalmont, H. L. B. (Cambs.)
 Martin, Richard Biddulph
 Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Milbank, Sir Powlett C. J.
 More, R. Jasper (Shropsh.)
 Morrell, George Herbert
 Morton, A. H. A. (Deptford)

Mount, William George
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. G. (Bute)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Nicol, Donald Ninian
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Staff.
 Pease, H. P. (Darlington)
 Penn, John
 Phillpotts, Captain Arthur
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Purvis, Robert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Rasch, Major Frederic C.
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Richards, Henry Charles
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. T.
 Robertson, H. (Hackney)
 Robinson, Brooke
 Round, James
 Royds, Clement Molyneux
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Ryder, John H. Dudley
 Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renf.)
 Smith, J. Parker (Lanarks.)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Stanley, Ed. Jas. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stewart, Sir M. J. M. Taggart
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir J. M.
 Stock, James Henry
 Strutt, Hn. Chas. Hedley
 Sturt, Hon. Humphrey N.
 Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Uni.)
 Tomlinson, W. E. Murray
 Valentia, Viscount
 Ward, Hon. R. A. (Crewe)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (I of Wight)
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Whitmore, Chas. Algernon
 Williams, Col. R. (Dorset)
 Williams, J. Powell (Birm.)
 Willox, Sir J. Archibald
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wylie, Alexander
 Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
 Young, Com. (Berks, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Allison, Robert Andrew
 Asher, Alexander
 Ashton, Thomas Gair
 Baker, Sir John
 Balfour, Rt. Hon. J. B. (Clack.)
 Bayley, T. (Derbyshire)
 Billson, Alfred
 Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
 Caldwell, James
 Causton, Richard Knight
 Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Douglas, C. M. (Lanark)
 Duckworth, James
 Evans, S. T. (Glamorgansh.)
 Fergusson, R. C. (Leith)
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Foster, Sir W. (Derby Co.)
 Gladstone, Rt. Hon. H. J.
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Grey, Sir E. (Berwick)
 Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
 Harwood, George

Hayne, Rt. Hon. C. Seale-
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Jones, W. (Carnarvonshire)
 Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hon. Sir U.
 Lawson, Sir W. (Cumb'land)
 Lewis, John Herbert
 Lyell, Sir Leonard
 Macaleese, Daniel
 McArthur, W. (Cornwall)
 McKenna, Reginald
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferd.
 Morgan, W. P. (Merthyr)
 Morley, Chas. (Brecons.)
 Morley, Rt. Hon. J. (Montrose)
 Moss, Samuel
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Nussey, Thomas Willans
 Paulton, James Mellor
 Pirie, Duncan V.
 Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
 Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Roberts, J. H. (Denbighs.)

Scott, Chas. P. (Leigh)
 Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarsh.)
 Smith, Samuel (Flint)
 Soames, Arthur Wellesley
 Souttar, Robinson
 Spicer, Albert
 Sullivan, Donald (Westmeath)
 Thomas, A. (Glamorgan, E.)
 Thomas, D. A. (Merthyr)
 Trevelyan, Charles Phillips
 Ure, Alexander
 Wallace, R. (Edinburgh)
 Warner, T. Courtenay T.
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams, J. Carvell (Notts.)
 Wilson, H. J. (York, W.R.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Lloyd-George and Mr.
 Strachey.

Vote agreed to.

Original Question put accordingly, and
 agreed to.

And, it being after midnight, the
 Chairman left the Chair to make his Re-
 port to the House.

Resolution to be reported upon Mon-
 day next; Committee to sit again upon
 Monday next.

BUSINESS DEFERRED.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Monday next.

ADULTERATION (FOODS PRODUCTS) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday
 19th May.

EXECUTORS (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday
 next.

PARISH COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOT- LAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday
 18th May.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday
 16th May.

SCHOOL BOARD CONFERENCES (SCOT- LAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday
 next.

FRANCHISE AND REMOVAL OF WOMEN'S DISABILITIES BILL.

Second Reading deferred from Monday
 next till Thursday 1st June.

House adjourned at ten minutes
 after Twelve of the clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 1st May 1899.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat upon the Woolsack at Four of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—

Charing Cross, Euston, and Hampstead Railway.

Great Western Railway.

Midland Railway.

And the Certificates that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have not been complied with:—

Brooke's Park, Londonderry—(Petition for Bill).

Millwall Dock—(Petition for Bill).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR BOARD (PILOTAGE) BILL [H.L.]

Committee (which stands appointed for Thursday next) put off to Monday next.

MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR BOARD (FINANCE) BILL [H.L.]

Committee (which stands appointed for Thursday next) put off to Monday next.

FRIENDS' PROVIDENT INSTITUTION BILL [H.L.]

Committee to meet To-morrow.

VOL. LXX. [FOURTH SERIES.]

GAINSBOROUGH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL (GAS) BILL [H.L.]

Committee to meet on Thursday next.

BURLEY-IN-WHARFEDALE URBAN DISTRICT (WATER) BILL.

Committee to meet on Thursday next.

HORSFORTH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL (WATER) BILL.

Committee to meet on Friday next.

ABERDEEN JOINT PASSENGER STATION BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the Committee having found that the petitioners had no *locus standi* before them; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on the 2nd March and 20th April last, discharged, and Bill committed forthwith.

CHURCH STRETTON WATER BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Select Committee with amendments.

RENFREW BURGH AND HARBOUR EXTENSION BILL [H.L.]

The Queen's Consent signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee with amendments.

DUBLIN IMPROVEMENT (BULL ALLEY AREA) BILL.

The Queen's Consent signified; and Bill reported with amendments.

ILFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL (RATES) BILL.

Reported without amendment.

ILFORD GAS BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.
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MID-KENT GAS BILL [H.L.]

Read a third time, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

BRIGG URBAN DISTRICT (GAS) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read a first time; and referred to the Examiners.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS (SUPERANNUATION) RULES).**

Rules for carrying into effect the Elementary School Teachers (Superannuation) Act, 1898.

TRADE REPORTS.

No. 2234. France (Calais and District);

No. 2235. Portugal (Lorenço Marques and District).

No. 2236. France (Brest and District);

No. 2237. United States (Baltimore and District).

TREATY SERIES, 1899.

No. 8. International Sanitary Convention, signed at Paris, 3rd April 1894, and declaration signed 13th October 1897. [Ratifications deposited at Paris 20th June 1898.]

No. 9. Convention between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, providing that submarine cables connecting the two countries shall be their joint property, signed at The Hague 5th April 1898. [Ratifications exchanged at The Hague 13th December 1898.] To which is annexed an agreement between the Postal Administrations of the two countries respecting the telegraphic correspondence over the direct submarine cables, signed at London 13th February 1899, and at The Hague 13 March 1899.

No. 10. Treaty between Great Britain and Bolivia for the mutual surrender of fugitive criminals, signed at Lima 22nd February 1892. [Ratifications exchanged at Lima 7th March 1898.]

IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

I. (Judicial Rents). Return for the month of October 1898;

II. (Proceedings). Returns for the months of January and February 1899;

III. (Rule). Rule, dated 17th April 1899, as to the service of originating notices.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP.

Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for the year 1898: Part I.—Tables.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PETITION.**MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (BOROUGH FUNDS) ACT, 1872.**

Petition for amendment of; of the Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILLS.**GAS ORDERS CONFIRMATION (No. 1) BILL [H.L.]**

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870, relating to Alton (Hants) Gas, Bedworth Gas, Elstree and Boreham Wood Gas, Limavady Gas, and Wellingborough Gas. (No. 62.)

Presented by the Earl of Dudley; read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

**GAS ORDERS CONFIRMATION (No. 2)
BILL [H.L.]**

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870, relating to Farnham Gas, Freshwater Gas, Morecambe Gas, and Newtown and Llanllwchaearn Gas. (No. 63.)

Presented by the Earl of Dudley; read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

GAS AND WATER ORDERS CONFIRMATION BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870, relating to Herne Bay Gas, Hoylake and West Kirby Gas and Water, Tonbridge Gas, and York Town and Blackwater Gas. (No. 64.)

Presented by the Earl of Dudley; read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

WATER ORDERS CONFIRMATION BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870, relating to Burnham and District Water, Harpenden Water, Maidstone Water, Stourbridge Water, Tilehurst, Pangbourne, and District Water. (No. 65.)

Presented by the Earl of Dudley; read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 12) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts 1882 to 1888, relating to Heywood, Longton, Ludlow, Mirfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, and Rawtenstall. (No. 66.)

Presented by the Earl of Dudley; read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 13) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882, 1888, and 1890, relating to Arbroath, Hawick, Kirkcaldy, and Musselburgh. (No. 67.)

Presented by the Earl of Dudley; read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 14) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Crayford, Halesowen, Handsworth, Lye and Wollescote, and Lymington. (No. 68.)

Presented by the Earl of Dudley; read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 15) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Bethnal Green, Blackheath and Greenwich District (Extension), Lewisham and Plumstead. (No. 69.)

Presented by the Earl of Dudley; read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

BILL DEFERRED.

PARISH COUNCILLORS (TENURE OF OFFICE) BILL.

Second Reading (which stands appointed for Thursday next) put off to Monday next.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I desire to ask a question of the noble Marquess the Prime Minister, of which I have given him private notice, whether he is in a position to give any information to the House as to the terms of the Agreement entered into with the Russian Government?

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (the Marquess of SALISBURY): I am in a little difficulty, because I am not quite sure whether I am acting in accordance with the wishes of the Russian Government in entering into the matter. That I have not been able to ascertain. But I imagine that as soon as the text arrives, which will be in two or three days, I shall be able to lay it upon the Table. As to the general drift of the Agreement the noble Lord probably knows that it is a railway agreement concerning our fields of operation in China, and that, while England agrees neither to undertake nor to encourage any railway, by English persons or others, north of the Great Wall, Russia, on the other hand, has made exactly similar stipulations with respect to the basin of the Yang-tsze. There are certain stipulations in the Agreement with respect to the railway to be made to Niu-Chwang, about which there has been a great deal of controversy, and our interests in that direction are, I think, entirely protected. I may say that, while I could not be silent on the subject, I am very anxious not to appear to attach to the particular stipulations of this Agreement an exaggerated importance. But I attach very great importance to the Agreement itself, as a sign of good feeling between the Governments of Great Britain and Russia. That is very much to be desired; and what is still more to be desired is that good feeling should grow up between the Russian and English peoples. But this particular Agreement will be of value in preventing the possibility of collision between the two Governments in that distant part of the world, and therefore it is a gauge for their future agreement for a long time, and will, I trust, lead to agreement in other matters.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee read.

MONEY-LENDING BILL.

Motion made and Question proposed—

"That it be an instruction to the Committee to confine the provisions of the Bill to the securing of honest dealing in money-lending, and to strike out the provision that fixes the rate of interest."—(*The Earl of Wemyss*.)

THE EARL OF WEMYSS said he felt that the Motion would more properly stand in the name of his noble Friend, the Duke of Argyll, as it was simply the embodiment in Parliamentary form of the noble Duke's wise views on the subject which he put forward some time ago in the letter to the "Times." He agreed with the noble Duke that it was desirable to prevent fraud, but that it would be impolitic and uncalled for to fix the rate of interest. By all means let the Government make the law more stringent, but it would be taking a step backwards if they attempted to re-enact the Usury laws which were repealed many years ago. He did not see how they could justify this retrograde step. In his opinion it was a bit of grandmotherly legislation. In a grandmotherly spirit they were going to save the fool from his folly, and, in his opinion, the Bill would prevent people, who were not fools, and who wanted money for good purposes, from getting it, and would in that way do more mischief than it could possibly hope to do good. He had been informed that the feeling on the part of borrowers was not one of gratitude to the noble Lord for his proposal in this direction. The effect would be that money would be much more difficult to get, and people would not undertake the risks as limited by this Bill. He had no doubt this kind of legislation was put forward with the most excellent intentions, but it was disguised under all sorts of humanitarian and philanthropic phraseology. Under the specious phrase that the Bill was to protect the weak against the strong, they were apt to forget that this was retrograde legislation, against which they should protest. He would suggest that whenever the Government brought in a Measure of such a retrograde character the Member of the Government who brought in the Bill should

appear, whether in their Lordships' House or in the other House, in the dress of the period to which he asked Parliament to retrograde. How would this work out in the present case? The usury laws were first mentioned in 1334. They were in the hands of the Bishops of that day, and therefore if his suggestion had been adopted in this case his noble Friend would have appeared in ecclesiastical canonicals—no doubt those of the Bishop of Hereford of that day. He had no knowledge as to what the canonical dress was so many years ago, but he had no doubt it was of a highly ritualistic character such as would have sent a cold shiver through the frame of Sir William Harcourt, but would have warmed the heart, perhaps, of Viscount Halifax. No doubt the Government, under the guidance of Mr. Chamberlain, would bring about a new heaven and a new earth. In taking this backward step they were thoroughly consistent with what they had been doing since 1870, when the Irish Land Act was passed. Upon what ground—it had no principle—was that Act passed? It was said that the state of Ireland was thoroughly exceptional, and that they were justified in dealing with it in an exceptional manner. The Government had fixed the price of land and rents, had cancelled debts, and two years ago fixed the price of a man from his head to his little finger under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The result of that Act had been that one great company, of which the Duke of Devonshire was the head, declined to take any man into their works over the age of 50. They had gone back very much to the dark ages of the Plantagenets. They had Bills before Parliament at the present moment designed to interfere with the rights of the owners of property and of their tenants without any regard to the contracts entered into between them. But the Bill which might be regarded as a *reductio ad absurdum* of this kind of legislation was the Seats for Shop Assistants (Scotland) Bill, which was read a third time in the House of Commons, and would shortly come before their Lordships' House. The Bill provided that seats should be supplied for shop assistants in Scotland, but there was nothing in the Bill to say whether the seats should be stuffed

with hay, straw, or horehair, or covered with canvas or leather. It would require an amending Act to define more clearly what was meant by "seats." He hoped, however, that such trifling, pettifoggish legislation would be cast out by their Lordships. The modern tendency was rather to bring in Bills which would please, which would be popular with the masses, whether they were founded on principle or not. These Bills, in fact, generally threw all principle aside. The basis of all legislation should be liberty, and this was the only sound basis upon which they could properly legislate. He desired respectfully to enter his protest against this kind of legislation, believing, as he did, in the liberty of one man to deal with another in all matters of money, trade, and commerce without State interference. It was on that basis that their great national prosperity had been built up, and he was perfectly certain it was only on that basis that they could hope that trade, commerce, and industry could prosper and progress. Therefore it was that he had ventured to put this notice on the Paper.

LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD: My Lords, I had hoped that several Members of your Lordships' House would have taken part in this discussion, but I do not propose to allow the matter to rest with your Lordships without a word or two being said by me in reply to the speech of the noble Earl. I could consent to this instruction without any interference to the Bill, but if I did so some misunderstanding might arise. My noble Friend is mistaken in saying that this Bill fixes the rate of interest. That is an impression which I see some of those who have written to the newspapers entertain, but there is no clause in the Bill which fixes the rate of interest, and I am quite certain my noble Friend has not looked at the Amendments on the Paper which fortify me in what I am now saying to the House. I do not propose to follow my noble Friend in his discursive speech, but I am certain every one of your Lordships, if you will look carefully at the Bill, will see that there is no intention of repealing the usury laws, and an examination of the clauses will, I am convinced, lead to the conclusion that the undertaking that there should be no

such repeal has been fully carried into effect. Clause 2 gives power to our courts to revise contracts only when, in their opinion, they are hard and unconscionable. I could have left the clause there, but in order to protect persons with whom there is no intention of interfering it has been thought better to afford that protection by providing that if a certain rate of interest should be charged, or below a certain rate, the court shall not have power to interfere at all. A man may charge 100 per cent. when this Bill is passed so long as the contract is not hard and unconscionable. I have put this clause into the Bill in order to protect the fair and honest dealer, and the noble Earl wishes to strike it out, and to give full power to interfere with any contract. But that is not the intention of the Government or of those who drafted the Bill. My noble Friend is shocked at what he calls this retrograde movement, but in 1872 this House passed a Bill which did fix the rate of interest. There was then exactly the same state of things—a man borrowing and a man lending; but instead of going to the money-lender's office the borrower went to the pawnbroker's shop. By the Act of 1872 it is distinctly laid down that the pawnbroker shall not take more than 20 per cent. interest in certain cases, nor more than 25 per cent. in others. There is the whole principle against which my noble Friend is contending—namely, the principle of limiting the interest charged. If my noble Friend is right in his construction of the Bill, then the Government are following the precedent set by the Act of 1872, and the same amounts have been taken. If the money-lender charges more than the pawnbroker, however, he is in the position that he may be able to recover the money he has lent with interest, unless the Court should decide it was a hard and unconscionable bargain. The Court of Equity has always been reviewing bargains of such a character. This Act does nothing more. It does not give power to review bargains unless they are of a hard and unconscionable character. I understand my noble Friend to contend we ought never to interfere with a contract made between men capable of judgment.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS: Unless immoral.

Lord James of Hereford.

LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD: I would ask my noble Friend to consider whether we are not now precluded from saying that no such legislation shall exist, for it does exist under the Truck Acts and the Pawnbrokers' Limitation Act. The noble Lord says we are introducing a novelty and a retrograde action, but I can give him many instances in which the Legislature has stepped in in the manner now proposed. The Legislature has fixed the exact sum that a cabman may demand from a passenger, and you constantly interfere with the freedom of contract there. It is far too late now for us to attempt to say that there shall be no such legislation as that proposed, and I submit that of all the legislation affecting the controlling of contracts there has never been one attempt more meritorious than the present, which is to prevent injury being done by the strong to the weak, whose necessities are being affected by causes that they cannot possibly avoid.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL said the Amendment proposed by the noble Earl on the Cross Benches in general terms expressed the opinion which he entertained, notwithstanding the speech they had just heard from the noble and learned Lord in charge of the Bill. But, at the same time, he did not agree with much that had been said by the noble Earl in his rather wide and discursive essay on the legislation of the past half century. There was a general feeling that they should not interfere with grown men as to freedom of contract, unless there was a great public necessity for doing so. Some years ago, by a mere accident, he was called upon to look into a case of ruination by a scoundrel of a money-lender, and what especially struck and shocked him was the evidence which came before him that these swindling transactions were strictly within the law, and, what was more, not only within the law, but actually facilitated by the law. He inquired closely into the matter, and he came to the conclusion that there was no remedy except by directing the attention of Parliament to the subject, and securing an alteration in the form of the law under which debts were recoverable. He heartily approved of the present Bill as a whole, except the clause which seemed to fix the rate of interest. He under-

stood from what his noble and learned Friend opposite had said that that was not the intention of the Government, and the noble Lord had put certain Amendments down, but until he saw the Bill in the amended form in print, he could not finally judge of the effect they would have. Their object should be to prevent fraud or facilities for fraud; but so far as the rate of interest was concerned, he thought it would be a mistake to mention it at all in the Bill. The Society of Writers to the Signet of Edinburgh had made several recommendations with regard to the Bill, which he hoped the noble and learned Lord would carefully consider.

LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD: I have considered them, and have prepared Amendments to meet them.

Question put.

Instruction negatived without a Division.

Motion made—

“That the House do now resolve itself into Committee.”

House in Committee, the EARL of MORLEY in the Chair.

LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD: I think it will be convenient to your Lordships if I state in general terms the nature of the Amendments I have placed on the Paper. The suggestions put forward by the Writers to the Signet of Edinburgh, the Procurators of Glasgow, and the Law Societies of England, were suggestions of a practical character, and I have endeavoured to meet every one of them in the Amendments which I propose to move. I am perfectly well aware of the delicacy of the subject with which we are dealing. I think we ought to confine the remedy to the disease, and ought not to interfere with the commercial transactions of the country. Of course, commerce depends upon the circulation of money, and that is represented to a great extent by the borrowing and lending of money. I agree that every care ought to be taken not to interfere with the legitimate lending and borrowing of money, and therefore I propose to exempt by name all loan societies, building societies, and societies

which lend money to their members. I take them out of the jurisdiction of the Court, and for this reason: they are all subject by Statute to certain specific regulations, and so long as they obey the Statutes under which they exist, we ought not to interfere with them by fresh rules. I have also endeavoured to alter the definition I had placed in the Bill of those who should not come within the term “money-lenders.” All bankers, insurance societies, solicitors, and all persons who do not make the lending of money their primary object will be exempt from the operation of the Bill. I am narrowing its application to those persons who notoriously carry on their business under conditions injurious to borrowers. In clause 2, from which my noble Friend has drawn a wrong inference, I have extended the limitation as to the amount of interest charged which shall give jurisdiction to the Courts. It was pointed out that it was somewhat anomalous that pawnbrokers might charge, without any restriction, 25 per cent. when the loan was under 40s., and 20 per cent. up to £10. I have accepted the pawnbrokers’ rates of interest for small sums, because it seems from experience that those rates are not excessive for such sums lent for a short time. The money-lender will be entitled to receive, without the jurisdiction of the Court coming into play, if he can obtain it by his contract, in respect of a loan not exceeding 40s., 25 per cent. per annum; for a loan exceeding 40s. but not exceeding £10, 20 per cent. per annum; and for a loan exceeding £10, 15 per cent. per annum. For larger sums I think 15 per cent. quite sufficient to charge. I have provided in the Bill as it stands that the contract of the money-lender, if he does not register as a money-lender, shall be voided. It was pointed out to me that this would hamper transactions in mortgages and various negotiable securities, in respect of which the borrower might be ignorant as to whether the lender had registered or not. These were arguments of a practical character, and therefore I have considered them, and have struck out the clause rendering the security void, and have made non-registration by the money-lender the subject of a penalty only in the case of a man who ought to have been registered. That will be a great protection to the commercial

transactions which are not sought to be affected by this Bill. There are other Amendments of a minor character, and I claim that the Bill, if these Amendments are inserted, will not do injury to any man who carries on his business honestly, but will be a strong, and, I hope, conclusive remedy against that numerous class who now inflict systematically great evil and great injustice on persons who are unable to protect themselves against their own necessities.

Amendments then considered.

On clause 1—

Amendments proposed—

"Clause 1, page 1, line 12, leave out 'every' and insert 'a'; line 12, leave out 'shall'; line 13, before 'register' insert 'shall'; line 19, before 'carry' insert 'shall'; line 22, leave out 'down' to end of the clause."

and insert—

"(c) shall not enter into any agreement with respect to the advance and repayment of money or take any security for money otherwise than in his own name; and

"(d) where the advance of money to a borrower is evidenced or secured by any document, shall furnish to the borrower at the time when the advance is made, a copy of that document; and

"(e) shall not take any document evidencing or securing the repayment of money unless the document specifies his true name and states on the face of it that he is a registered money-lender."—(*Lord James of Hereford.*)

Question put.

Amendments agreed to.

Question put.

"That clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Motion agreed to.

On clause 2—

Amendments proposed—

"Clause 2, page 2, lines 9 and 10, leave out 'for the recovery of money lent.'"

"Clause 2, page 2, line 10, after 'money-lender' insert 'for the recovery of any money lent after the passing of this Act, or the enforcement of any agreement or security made or taken after the passing of this Act, in respect of money lent either before or after the passing of this Act.'"

"Line 11, leave out 'loan' and insert 'actually lent.'"—(*Lord James of Hereford.*)

Lord James of Hereford.

Question put.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"Clause 2, line 12, leave out 'ten per cent. per annum,' and insert 'interest mentioned in the schedule of this Act.'"—(*Lord James of Hereford.*)

LORD DAVEY objected to the court having power to reopen a transaction on the mere ground that the interest exceeded a certain sum. He felt sure they all sympathised with the noble and learned Lord in his endeavour to protect the weak from the strong, and to put an end to those shocking cases to which the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll) had referred, and the extortionate and unconscionable proceedings which, no doubt, had taken place in connection with money-lending. The noble and learned Lord said the Bill did not fix the rate of interest, and that the clause was intended merely for the purpose of giving the courts jurisdiction in the case of unconscionable and harsh bargains irrespective of the rate of interest. He confessed he did not read the clause in that way. The clause at present provided that—

"Where proceedings are taken in any court for the recovery of money lent by a money-lender, and the court has reason to believe that the interest charged in respect of the loan exceeds the rate of 10 per cent. per annum, or that the amounts charged for expenses, inquiries, fines, bonus, renewals, or any other charges, are excessive, the court may re-open the transactions."

LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD: But it must be hard and unconscionable in addition.

LORD DAVEY said he could not find those words in the Bill. If the Bill had been framed in that manner, and it was stated definitely that the court had power to reopen transactions in the case of hard and unconscionable and oppressive bargains, and where there was evidence of fraud, it would have removed many of the objections.

LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD: Lord Knutsford has framed an Amendment which the Government has accepted, and which will meet that objection.

LORD DAVEY said that even reading Lord Knutsford's Amendment into the

clause, he still thought that the court would have power to reopen a transaction on the mere ground that the interest exceeded a certain sum. What he objected to was making any particular rate of interest the ground for reopening the transaction. The interest might be exorbitant without the bargain being harsh and unconscionable. This would depend upon the particular circumstances of the case. A certain interest might be harsh and unconscionable in some cases which would not be so in others. It was impossible to predict beforehand, until they knew the circumstances of a certain case, whether a particular rate of interest was harsh and unconscionable in that case or not. The risk was a large element which had to be covered by the rate of interest, whilst in cases where the risk and expense were not so great, the same rate of interest which was not unreasonable in one case might be perfectly unreasonable in another. In his opinion, it was an entirely false mode of legislating on the subject to adopt the rate of interest as the ground or the standard on which the court was to act.

***LORD KNUTSFORD** explained that the object of the Measure was to stop harsh and unconscionable bargains, and it was so stated in the Preamble. But it was necessary to provide for this in the enacting part of the Bill, and he therefore proposed to move an Amendment to insert in clause 2, after the words "are excessive," the words "and by reason thereof or otherwise the transaction is harsh and unconscionable." If those words were inserted, the court could not re-open the transaction on account of the interest charged unless the contract was harsh and unconscionable.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I would submit to my noble Friend opposite that this Amendment, as it is worded, does not carry into effect what he desires. He proposes to insert "and that by reason thereof or otherwise the transaction is harsh and unconscionable," and if you read these words into the clause, it runs as follows—

"Where proceedings are taken in any court for the recovery of money lent by a moneylender, and the court has reason to believe that the interest charged exceeds the rate of 10 per cent. per annum, or that the amounts charged for expenses, inquiries, fines, bonus,

renewals, or any other purpose, are excessive, and that by reason thereof or otherwise the transaction is harsh and unconscionable, the court may re-open the transaction."

According to my reading of the clause, as amended, my noble Friend's words will apply only to the amounts charged for expenses, etc., and not to the interest. If the Amendment applies to the whole of the words in the clause, then I think it meets to a very considerable extent the objections of my noble Friend behind me, but I should like the learned and noble Lord in charge of the Bill to assure us on the point.

LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD: The intention is that the words "and that by reason thereof or otherwise the transaction is harsh and unconscionable" shall apply to both—the rate of interest, and the amounts charged for expenses, etc.—and care will be taken in the Standing Committee or on the Third Reading that that intention is carried out.

Question put—

"That the words 'ten per cent. per annum' stand part of the clause."

Motion negatived.

Question put—

"That the words 'interest mentioned in the schedule to this Act' be here inserted."

Motion agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"Clause 2, page 2, line 14, after 'excessive,' insert 'and that by reason thereof or otherwise the transaction is harsh and unconscionable.'—(*Viscount Knutsford.*)

Question put.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"Clause 2, line 13, after 'bonus,' insert 'premium.' Clause 2, line 26, after 'moneylender,' insert 'and if the moneylender has parted with the security may order him to indemnify the borrower.' Clause 2, line 35, at the end of the line insert as a new sub-section: (4) 'Provided that nothing in the foregoing provisions of this section shall affect the rights of any bona fide assignee or holder for value.'—(*Lord James of Hereford.*)

Question put.

Amendment agreed to.

Question put—

"That clause 2, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Motion agreed to.

New clause proposed—

"Insert as a new clause after clause 2:—1. 'Where a moneylender fails to register himself as required by this Act, or carries on business otherwise than in his own name, or elsewhere than at his registered address, he shall be liable on conviction under the Summary Jurisdiction Acts to a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds, and in the case of a second or subsequent conviction, to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for a term not exceeding three months, or to a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds, or to both.' 2. 'Where a moneylender fails to comply with the requirements of this Act as to the form and contents of agreements and securities, or as to furnishing copies of documents to the borrower, he shall be liable on conviction under the Summary Jurisdiction Acts to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds for each offence.'"—(*Lord James of Hereford.*)

Question put.

New clause agreed to.

Question put—

"That clause 3 stand part of the Bill."

Motion agreed to.

New clause proposed—

"Insert as a new clause after clause 3—(1.) A prosecution for failure to register as a money lender under this Act shall not be instituted except by or with the consent of the Attorney-General. (2.) In this section the expression "Attorney-General" means the Attorney or Solicitor-General for England, and as respects Scotland means the Lord Advocate, and as respects Ireland means the Attorney or Solicitor-General for Ireland."—(*Lord James of Hereford.*)

Question put.

New clause agreed to.

New clause proposed—

"Insert as a new clause after clause 3—4. Where in any proceedings under section 2 of the Betting and Loans (Infancy) Act, 1892, it is proved that the person to whom the document was sent was an infant, the person charged shall be deemed to have known that the person to whom the document was sent was an infant unless he proves that he had reasonable ground for believing the infant to be of full age."—(*Lord Norton.*)

LORD NORTON said his object in moving this clause was to render operative the very useful Act introduced by

the late Lord Herschell, and carried with perfect unanimity through both Houses of Parliament, making it penal for a moneylender to incite an infant to borrow money. Unfortunately, the Act threw the onus of proof on the prosecutor of the moneylender that he knew that his victim was an infant. He believed, owing to this being the case, that the Act had been rendered inoperative, and that the Public Prosecutor had refused to prosecute in certain cases because there were no means of proving that the moneylender knew the boy was an infant. He (Lord Norton) called Lord Herschell's attention to this fact, and the noble and learned Lord agreed that it was necessary the words should be altered, and promised to introduce a Bill for that purpose. The new clause which he was moving was in exactly the same words as the late Lord Herschell would have adopted. He could hardly suppose there was any Member of their Lordships' House who would not be most ready to accept this new clause.

LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD: I am glad enough to accept it. I knew that Lord Herschell wished this Amendment, and I do not think any injustice can be inflicted by asking a moneylender to show that he was not aware that the borrower was an infant.

Question put—

"That this clause be here inserted."

Motion agreed to.

On clause 4,

Amendment proposed—

"Clause 4, page 3, line 7, after 'person' leave out to end of clause and insert 'whose business is that of moneylending or who advertises or announces himself or holds himself out in any way as carrying on that business; but shall not include—(a) any pawnbroker in respect of business carried on by him in accordance with the provisions of the Pawnbrokers Act, 1872; or (b) any registered society within the meaning of the Friendly Societies Act, 1896, or any registered society mentioned in sections 2 or 4 of that Act; or (c) any person bona fide carrying on the business of banking or insurance or any business not having for its primary object the lending of money.'"—(*Lord James of Hereford.*)

Question put.

Amendment agreed to.

Question put—

"That clause 4, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6 agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"Insert as a Schedule—'Schedule.—Rate of Interest.—In respect of a loan (whether made by one or more advances)—Not exceeding 40s., 25 per cent. per annum; exceeding 40s., but not exceeding £10, 20 per cent. per annum; exceeding £10, 15 per cent., per annum.'"—*(Lord James of Hereford.)*

Question put—

Schedule agreed to.

Bill reported with Amendments to the House.

RUSSIAN VOLUNTEER FLEET.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH inquired whether Her Majesty's Government had information respecting the numbers, size, and armament (if any) of the vessels composing the Russian Volunteer Fleet, and whether such fleet was acting under control of and by instructions from the Russian Admiralty; secondly, whether these vessels, if armed, were authorised and permitted to pass through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles into the Mediterranean. He disclaimed all unfriendly feeling towards Russia, more especially after the gratifying announcement which had been made by the Prime Minister, but he felt that inasmuch as the strength of our sea forces was based entirely on that of other nations, we ought to know, as far as possible, what the forces of other nations actually were. It had come to his knowledge, and probably to the knowledge of most of their Lordships, that in addition to the known armaments of Russia, she maintained, whether or not, a very considerable Volunteer Fleet. If those vessels were of any considerable power it was absolutely essential that their force should be known, and also what their duties were, and whether the Russian Government intended to employ them for warlike purposes. He had been informed that ships of the Russian Volun-

teer Fleet had passed through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles carrying munitions of war.

LORD CHURCHILL (in the absence of the noble Duke the PAYMASTER-GENERAL) said that in answer to the question of the noble Viscount he had to inform their Lordships, on behalf of the Admiralty, that the Russian Volunteer Fleet comprised 15 vessels at present afloat. Two more were building, and two were said to be projected. Their size ranged from 7,000 tons gross downwards. The fleet was managed by a special committee at St. Petersburg, subject to the general approval of the Minister of Marine. These vessels could pass through the Straits when flying a merchant flag, but all armed vessels of war required the Sultan's permission, and it was understood that an Iradé from the Porte was necessary to enable the vessels of the Russian Volunteer Fleet to pass when carrying troops or war material. The Admiralty were not aware that the vessels were at present equipped for war with ammunition and armaments aboard.

LUNACY BILL.

Motion made—

"That this Bill be read a third time."

Amendment proposed—

"Clause 21, page 7, lines 33 and 34, leave out 'and subject to confirmation by the County Council'; Clause 21, line 39, at the end of the clause add, 'Provided that if the allowance or gratuity is payable out of the county fund, it shall not be paid until the grant thereof has been confirmed by the County Council.'"—*(The Lord Chancellor.)*

Question put—

Amendment agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

BILLS ADVANCED.

BODIES CORPORATE (JOINT TENANCY) BILL [H.L.]

Read the third time (according to order); an amendment made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES (NOTIFICATION) ACT (1889) EXTENSION BILL.

To be read the second time on Friday next: (The Lord Thring).

METROPOLITAN POLICE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

To be read the second time To-morrow: (The Lord Belper).

BROUGHTY FERRY GAS AND PAYING ORDER BILL [H.L.]

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without amendment: Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

TRAWLERS' CERTIFICATES SUSPENSION BILL [H.L.]

Second Reading (which stands appointed for Thursday next) put off to Friday next.

House adjourned at Six of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 1st May 1899.

Mr. SPEAKER took the Chair at Three of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [H.L.] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which

are applicable thereto, have been complied with, namely:—

Hull, Barnsley, and West Riding Junction Railway and Dock Bill [H.L.]

Kew Bridge Bill [H.L.]

Ordered that the Bills be read a second time.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS [H.L.] (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, namely:—

St. Andrews Burgh Provisional Order Bill [H.L.]

Ordered that the Bills be read a second time To-morrow.

PRIVATE BILLS [H.L.] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, namely:—

Brooke's Park, Londonderry, Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

MIDLAND AND SOUTH WESTERN JUNCTION RAILWAY BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

LISBURN TOWN COMMISSIONERS BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

SCUNTHORPE URBAN DISTRICT GAS AND WATER BILL.

As amended, considered; An Amendment made; Bill to be read the third time.

TAFF VALE RAILWAY BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Arbroath Corporation Gas Bill [H.L.]

Cambridge University and Town Gas Bill [H.L.]

Dumbarton Burgh Bill [H.L.]

Glastonbury Water Bill [H.L.]

Great Yarmouth Corporation Bill [H.L.]

Inverness Harbour Bill [H.L.]

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill.

Surrey Commercial Docks Bill [H.L.]

West Highland Railway Bill [H.L.]

Read a second time, and committed.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.

Pilotage Provisional Order Bill.

Read a third time, and passed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP D).

Sir Joseph Pease reported from the Committee on Group D of Private Bills, That the parties promoting the Milton Creek Conservancy Bill had stated that the evidence of Edward John Marmion, Medical Officer of Health for Milton, was essential to their case; and it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Edward John Marmion do attend the said Committee upon Wednesday, at Twelve of the clock, and do produce his medical reports and those of his predecessor, Dr. C. H. Fisher.

Ordered, That Edward John Marmion do attend the said Committee on Group D of Private Bills on Wednesday, at Twelve of the clock.

Sir Joseph Pease reported from the Committee on Group D of Private Bills, That the parties promoting the Milton Creek Conservancy Bill had stated that the evidence of William Parham, Clerk of Milton Urban District Council, was essential to their case; and it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said William Parham do attend the said Committee upon Wednesday at Twelve of the clock, and do produce minute books and correspondence with Local Government Board, Faversham Port Sanitary Authority, Kent County Council, and the Sittingbourne Urban District Council from 1894 to the present time, so far as the same relate to the Creek.

Ordered, That William Parham do attend the said Committee on Group D of Private Bills upon Wednesday, at Twelve of the clock.

Sir Joseph Pease reported from the Committee on Group D of Private Bills, That the parties promoting the Milton Creek Conservancy Bill had stated that the evidence of William James Harris, Clerk of the Sittingbourne Urban District Council, was essential to their case; and it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said William James Harris do attend the said Committee upon Wednesday, at Twelve of the clock, and do produce minute books of that Council and correspondence with the Local Government Board and the Milton Urban District Council, and also minute book of the Milton Rural District Council and correspondence with the Local Government Board with the Milton Rural District Council; also copies of medical reports of Edward John Marmion, Medical Officer of Health for Milton, and those of his predecessor, Dr. C. H. Fisher.

Ordered, That William James Harris, do attend the said Committee on Group D of Private Bills upon Wednesday, at Twelve of the clock.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F).

Mr. Hargreaves Brown reported from the Committee on Group F of Private Bills, That Mr. Leuty, one of the members of the said Committee, was not present within one hour after the time appointed for the meeting of the Committee this day.

Report to lie upon the Table.

SMALL HOUSES (ACQUISITION OF OWNERSHIP) BILL.

Reported, from the Standing Committee on Law, etc.;

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 180.]

Minutes of Proceedings to be printed. [No. 180.]

Bill, as amended (by the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 168.]

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer additional powers on the Court of Teinds in Scotland with reference to the alteration of the sites of Parish Churches, and of the districts attached, and with reference to Collegiate charges." [Parish Churches (Scotland) Bill [H.L.]

PETITIONS.**COLONIAL SOLICITORS BILL.**

Petition of the Incorporated Society of Law Agents in Scotland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COUNCILLORS (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Rochdale, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROCERS' LICENCES (SCOTLAND) ABOLITION BILL.

Petition from Leith, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Dundee, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND RENTS (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Petitions in favour;—From Leighton Buzzard;—Halifax;—Merthyr Tydfil;—and, Ebbw Vale; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Inverness;—Aberdeen;—Edinburgh (six);—Ayr;—Dumbarton;—Kirkintilloch;—Sanday;—St. Mary's Holm;—Arbroath (two);—Dundee (five);—Westray;—Glasgow (five);—Cromarty;—Kingussie;—Forfar;—Breachin;—and, Pollokshields; to lie upon the Table.

LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL.

Petition from St. Pancras, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Hafort;—Killamarsh;—Wynnstay;—Lidgett;—Holbrook;—Whitwell;—St. John's;—Rotherham Main, No. 1;—Denaby Main;—Dunkirk;—Chamber Lane;—Allhallows;—and, Wharnccliffe and Wath Main Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.

Petition from Bristol, for extension to women; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Aberdeen, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Hastings, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS BILL.

Petition from Bolton, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment;—From Montrose; Arbroath; Brechin; and Forfar; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS BILL.

Petition from Bristol, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Penzance; Wickham Brook; Leigh; Ludlow; Oldham; Rochford; and, Chelsea; to lie upon the Table.

SCHOOL BOARD CONFERENCES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Leith, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS (PROHIBITION).

Petition from Hastings, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

TEINDS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Perth, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

TEMPERANCE REFORM (THREEFOLD OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Glasgow (four); Lewis; Row; Dunbar; Perth; Garvald; Stornoway; Abernethy; Dundee; St. Mungo; Lerwick; Glasford; Ayr; Forglen; Kinross; Scottish Threefold Option Alliance; Avoch; and, Strathbungo; to lie upon the Table.

VACCINATION ACTS, 1857 to 1898.

Petition from Derby, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (RULE).

Copy presented,—of Rule issued by the Irish Land Commission, dated 17th April 1899, as to the Service of Originating Notices (by Command); to lie upon the Table and to be printed. (No. 176.)

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (JUDICIAL RENTS).

Copy presented,—of Return for the month of October, 1898 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (PROCEEDINGS).

Copy presented,—of Return of Proceedings during the month of January 1899 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

Copy presented,—of Return of Proceedings during the month of February 1899 (by command); to lie upon the Table.

TREATY SERIES (No. 8, 1899).

Copy presented,—of International Sanitary Convention, signed at Paris 3rd April 1894, and Declaration, signed 13th October 1897. Ratifications deposited at Paris, 20th June 1898 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

TREATY SERIES (No. 9, 1899).

Copy presented,—of Convention between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands providing that Submarine Cables connecting the two Countries shall be their Joint Property. Signed at The Hague, 5th April 1898, Ratifications exchanged at The Hague, 13th December 1898. To which is annexed an Agreement between the Postal Administrations of the two countries respecting the Telegraphic Correspondence of the Direct Submarine Cables. Signed at London, 13th February 1899, and at The Hague, 13th March 1899 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

TREATY SERIES (No. 10, 1899).

Copy presented,—of Treaty between Great Britain and Bolivia for the Mutual Surrender of Fugitive Criminals. Signed at Lima, 22nd February 1892. Ratifications exchanged at Lima, 7th March 1898 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented,—of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2234-7 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Copy presented,—of Report of the Chief Inspector for 1898 (Part I.—Tables) (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (SUGAR IMPORTATION AND CULTIVATION).

Return presented,—relative thereto (ordered 24th April; *Sir William Wedderburn*); to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
WARNED.

Return presented,—relative thereto (ordered 27th April; *Sir Francis Powell*); to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 177.)

POST OFFICE (CONVEYANCE OF MAILS FROM HARWICH TO THE HOOK OF HOLLAND).

Copy ordered, “of Contract, dated the 3rd day of April 1899, between the Postmaster-General and the Great Eastern Railway Company for the daily Conveyance of Mails from Harwich to the Hook of Holland, and of Treasury Minute thereon.”—(*Mr. Hanbury.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 178.)

CELTIC ORNAMENTS FOUND IN IRELAND.

Copy ordered, “of Report of Committee appointed by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty’s Treasury to inquire into the circumstances under which certain Celtic Ornaments found in Ireland were recently offered for sale to the British Museum, and to consider the relations between the British Museum and the Museums of Edinburgh and Dublin with regard to the acquisition and retention of objects of Antiquarian and Historic interest; with Evidence, Appendices, and Index.”—(*Mr. Hanbury.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 179.)

QUESTIONS.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK
ACCOUNTS.

SIR J. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, what is the number of accounts in the Post Office Savings Bank each having a balance of over £100 to their credit; and what is the aggregate amount of deposits in such accounts of more than £100 now held by the Savings Bank?

MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrew's Burghs) for the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Hanbury, Preston): The information desired by the honourable Member cannot be given for the present date, but at the date of the last special Return—namely, December 31 1895—the number of accounts in the Post Office Savings Bank having a balance of over £100 to their credit was—individual depositors' accounts, 240,281; societies' accounts, 8,662. The aggregate amount of deposits in these accounts was—individual depositors' accounts, £35,197,684; societies' accounts, £3,397,831.

TRANSVAAL REPUBLIC AND THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have objected to the presence of a delegate from the Transvaal Republic at the coming Peace Conference; and, if so, on what grounds?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. ST. JOHN BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): Her Majesty's Government have not had occasion to object to the presence of a delegate from the South African Republic, as the proposal to send an invitation to the Transvaal has not been made.

UNITED STATES TARIFF.

MR. COGHILL (Stoke-on-Trent): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether the Foreign Office give instructions to our representations to the Government of the United States as to the great injury which is being inflicted on various branches of British Trade by the existing tariff of the United States.

MR. BRODRICK: It is not usual to make representations to foreign countries upon their tariff policy except in connection with some specific commercial negotiations, and Her Majesty's Government do not consider that at the present moment any instructions in the sense suggested would be likely to result in benefit to British commercial interests.

MILITIA FIELD SERVICE CAP.

MR. WARNER (Stafford, Lichfield): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if he could state how many Militia battalions will be supplied with the field service cap this year, and which battalions?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. J. POWELL WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): It is expected that all Militia battalions will receive the field service cap in time for this year's training.

TURKISH HOSTILITIES IN YEMEN.

COLONEL MILWARD (Stratford-upon-Avon): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, with reference to the prolonged hostilities in the Turkish dominions of Yemen, whether he would consider the desirability of appointing a British Consul at Sana in the interests of peace?

MR. BRODRICK: Her Majesty's Consul at Jiddah reported in December last that the Turkish troops had captured Shahel, an important mountain post of the insurgent Arabs. Since then no definite information has been received as to the progress of hostilities, though it is understood that the country is still in an unsettled condition, and that further reinforcements of Turkish troops were sent to Hodeida in January and February. Her Majesty's Government do not think it desirable to make the proposal suggested.

CANAL BOAT CHILDREN.

MR. DRAGE (Derby): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention had been called to the repeated Reports of Her Majesty's inspectors with regard to the irregular attendance at school of canal boat children; and whether he would consider the desirability of introducing any reform in the existing law or its administration with a view to remedying the existing evil?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (Sir J. GORST, Cambridge University): The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. The matter has been often under the consideration of the Committee of Council. No efficient remedy seems possible so long as children of school age are allowed to travel on canal boats; and this cannot be prevented without an alteration in the law which cannot be recommended without much further consideration.

TRANSPORT OF INVALIDS FROM INDIA.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that upwards of 200 sick and wounded officers, and 2,500 men are annually brought home as invalids from India and the Colonies, and that the present method of conveyance by hired troop-ship service has been unfavourably reported upon in the Army Medical Blue Book for 1897, he will consider whether the War Office can establish a permanent hospital ship for this service?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: The provision of a hospital ship for conveying the sick and wounded from India to this country would rest with the Indian Government, and after very full consideration the Secretary of State is not prepared to press the adoption of such a system upon that Department. The balance of advantage is not by any means entirely on the side of a hospital ship for the conveyance of invalids as against their more rapid and frequent conveyance on board transports, in the equipment of which great improvements have recently taken place. These considerations apply with special force to our widely scattered Colonial garrisons, invalids from which are sent home by packet at the earliest possible opportunity.

EXPORTS AND THE COLONIES.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfarshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what proportion British exports to self-governing Colonies bear to British exports to foreign countries; and

whether, over a period of years, that proportion shows any signs of increasing or decreasing?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon) said: In 1897 the value of exports from the United Kingdom to the self-governing Colonies was 21.5 per cent. of the value of the exports to foreign countries. In 1877 the corresponding percentage was 19.4.

THE CROMWELL STATUE.

MR. W. REDMOND: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the present Parliament has sanctioned the site for the statue of Oliver Cromwell; and, if not, whether an opportunity will be given the House of expressing by vote an opinion on the matter?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): As I stated on Tuesday last in answer to the honourable Member for Belfast, my predecessor in 1895 granted permission for the erection of a statue to Cromwell in the Westminster-hall Garden, at the expense of a private donor. I merely confirmed the engagement which had been made, and am ready to defend the course I took if the honourable Member desires to raise the Question on the Vote for my salary in Class II.

MR. W. REDMOND: May I ask the right honourable Gentleman, in connection with this, whether he will be kind enough to describe exactly where the site is? If it is where I think it is, I am quite sure the statue will not be seen, and in that case I do not object.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS: The site selected is in the sunk garden on the west side of Westminster Hall.

MR. W. REDMOND: A sort of area.

INDIA AND AUSTRALIAN WINES.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Government of the Colony of Victoria pay any bounty, direct or indirect, on the production of wine; and, if so,

whether such wine will be liable to a countervailing duty if imported into India?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I understand that the Government of Victoria have in the past spent money to encourage the production of wine in that colony, but I doubt whether they have ever taken any measure which would bring their wines under the operation of the Indian Act. As I have already stated in this House, the Act will be administered by the Government of India, who must be guided by circumstances and by experience in dealing with the various cases as they arise.

WINE DUTIES.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Isle of Thanet): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the lowest scale of wine duties in force in any of the self-governing colonies; and whether there is any ground for the apprehension to which he recently gave expression, that foreign wines might be imported into British possessions and subsequently re-exported to the United Kingdom, with a view to evading the additional duties, if such were not applicable to inter-British trade?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir M. HICKS BEACH): So far as I am aware the lowest scale of duty in force in any of the self-governing colonies upon wines, except sparkling wine, is 5s. per gallon. In the ordinary way, any one sending wine from Europe to an Australian colony for re-exportation to this country would bond or tranship it there, so as not to pay the Australian duties. I do not doubt that the Australian Governments would endeavour to make arrangements that would prevent this; but there is always the risk of fraud. In the case of a preferential rate of duty of 2s. per gallon here in favour of colonial bottled wines the aggregate amount of such difference of duty upon 56 gallons of wine (the content of a hogshead) would be £5 12s., or upon 120 gallons (the content of a pipe) £12. Such a stake would be very likely to invite attempts at fraud.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): I would ask whether, under the proposed rearrangement of the wine duties, the duties on Australian Burgundies in bottle correspond to a duty of 13s. 6d. per gallon of spirit; the duties on clarets in bottle, 17 degs. to 18 degs., correspond to a duty of 16s. 6d. per gallon of spirit; and the duties on Moselle in bottle, 13 degs., correspond to a duty of 22s. 4d. per gallon of spirit.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: If the proposed duties upon wines imported in bottle had reference solely to alcoholic strength, the rates per gallon of proof spirit contained in such wines would approximately be those named in the Question. But that is not the case. The duty upon bottled wines was designed to fall with greater weight upon the more costly clarets, Burgundies, and hocks (just as the existing surtax upon sparkling wines falls mainly upon champagne), and this it will actually do, because the cheaper still wines will in future come over in cask and be bottled here, and the dearer wines alone will pay the duty of 3s. per gallon. The arrangement, therefore, has the effect of redressing, to a great extent, the defect of the purely alcoholic scale under which a claret or Burgundy worth 12s. per dozen paid the same duty as one worth 80s.

MR. COURTNEY: May I ask my right honourable Friend whether my figures are correct?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: They may be, but figures, in my opinion, have nothing to do with the matter.

MR. COURTNEY: Does not my right honourable Friend base his case in some degree on the relative taxation of alcohol?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Quite so. That is, with regard to the duty on wine in the wood, and we are doing with regard to wine in bottle precisely what we have already done in regard to champagne.

AFRICAN RAILWAYS.

MR. J. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what mileage of the railway in respect of which an Imperial guarantee has been asked for by the British South Africa Company lies within the territory subject to their control, what mileage in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and what (if any) within Cape Colony; whether the Cape Government had been asked to contribute a portion of the guarantee; and, in that case, what portion; whether the reply of the Imperial Government was conditional on that of the Cape Government; and whether the railway from Beira to Salisbury with an extension to Bulawayo will shortly be opened, with the result of diverting a large portion of traffic and receipts from the railway for which a guarantee has been asked?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: With reference to paragraph 1, the Bechuanaland Railway Company's existing line lies for about 80 miles within Southern Rhodesia, for about 394 miles within the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and for about 111 miles within the Cape Colony; and, with reference to paragraph 4, the Beira-Salisbury line at present stops at Salisbury, and I have not heard of any present intention of extending it to Bulawayo. Papers will shortly be laid on the Table which will contain an answer to paragraphs 2 and 3; but I may say, in anticipation of them, that we were unable to accept the proposals made to us by Mr. Rhodes; and he has been unable to accept the offer which we made in return.

MR. J. ELLIS: I beg to ask whether the right honourable Gentleman's attention has been called to the statement in a letter in the Money Article in "The Times" of April 26th that the debentures of the Mashonaland Railway have been refused a quotation on the Stock Exchange in consequence of the British South Africa Company not having performed the covenants entered into when they were issued.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: When the Papers to which I have already referred are presented the honourable Member will, I think, see that this matter, whatever may be the facts, does not bear on the proposal Her Majesty's Government have had before them.

THE PACIFIC CABLE SCHEME.

MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether a decision has been arrived at in the matter of the Pacific cable scheme; and whether Her Majesty's Government have decided to contribute, in the form of a yearly subsidy, the full amount which they have been recommended, under the report of the Pacific Cable Committee of 1896, to guarantee for the construction of an all-British cable running from Vancouver by Fanning Island to Norfolk Island, whence it will branch to Queensland and New Zealand, and, if so, whether he can give the House any further information on this subject?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: A decision on this matter has been arrived at. Papers will be at once laid on the table explaining the terms on which Her Majesty's Government have offered to contribute to the cost of the scheme.

FRITTED LEAD.

SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the master potters proposed in their reply to the Home Office to make delay in the employment of fritted lead; and what steps he intends to take to induce the manufacturers to carry out the requirements of the Lead Report?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir M. W. RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): The master potters have definitely undertaken to use in future for glazes on

"fritted" lead, but they ask that those of their number who have no experience in "fritted" glazes may be allowed a reasonable time to master the practical points. This request seems reasonable. As already stated, I propose to amend the special rules for this trade, in order to give effect as far as practicable to the recommendations of the experts.

ENGLAND AND THE VATICAN.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether confidential negotiations have been proceeding between the Government and the Catholic authorities in London and the Catholic authorities in Rome with a view to the appointment, with recognised diplomatic position and powers, of duly-accredited Ministers to and from the Holy See.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): Sir, the answer is in the negative.

CHILD LABOUR.

MR. WARNER: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in consequence of the serious condition of matters with reference to child labour recently disclosed, Her Majesty's Government intend to bring in any Bill or take any other steps for the protection of the many thousands of overworked children?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am not in a position to make any statement on the subject of this Question.

CYPRUS MAIL SERVICE.

MR. ORR-EWING (Ayr Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Cyprus Government have made a contract for the mail service with Austrian Lloyds; and, if so, whether he can state the terms of the contract, and the date on which it will commence?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): The Cyprus Government have made a provisional contract subject to the approval of Her Majesty's Government with the Austrian Lloyds Company for the mail service between Cyprus and Egypt, to commence on June 1st; as the contract is now under the consideration of the Treasury it would not be convenient to state its terms at present.

TRANSVAAL.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Sir Alfred Milner, Her Majesty's Commissioner in South Africa, has received and transmitted to Her Majesty's Government a petition by Uitlanders in the Transvaal, complaining that they were not accorded the full rights of citizenship in the Transvaal; and whether there was any precedent for receiving a petition on such a subject from residents in a State which in its internal affairs is independent of this country?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: Her Majesty's High Commissioner of South Africa has received and transmitted to Her Majesty's Government a petition to the Queen from over 21,000 British subjects in the Transvaal complaining of alleged oppression and unjust treatment, and, among other things, of exclusion from the franchise. I am not aware of any precedent for such a petition, nor am I aware of any precedent for the state of circumstances which has led to its presentation; but I apprehend that there can be no doubt as to the propriety of receiving the petition, having regard to the position which this country occupies in relation to the South African Republic.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Is the right honourable Gentleman satisfied as to the genuineness of the signatures?

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: The High Commissioner has carefully examined the petition and considers that the general genuineness of the signatures to it may be vouched for.

BRITISH TROOPS IN INDIA.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, taking into consideration the fact that the increase in the number of British soldiers invalided home from India for venereal disease was 20 per cent. over the preceding year in 1895, 60 per cent. in 1896, and 199 per cent. in 1897 over the figure for 1894, he would at once increase the stringency of the regulations now in force?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: I must refer my honourable and gallant Friend to the answer I gave to his Question on this subject on March 9. If the improvement which, as I then said, has begun to show itself in the admission rate for these diseases is continuous, as I trust it may be, a reduction in the number of invalidings may be expected to follow, though necessarily somewhat later. Until the present regulations have had a fair trial I do not propose to take any further action.

LIVERPOOL SCHOOL BOARD CATECHISM.

MR. BILLSON (Halifax) (in the absence of Sir J. Brunner, Cheshire, North-wich): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the adoption by the Liverpool School Board of a Catechism for use in their schools; whether he is aware that several members of the Board objected to the adoption of the Catechism, on the ground that it was denominational; and whether the Board are acting in accordance with section 14 (b) of the Elementary Education Act, 1870?

SIR J. GORST: A copy of the Liverpool School Board Catechism has been unofficially supplied to me, and I am informed that it is not yet in use. No complaint from any member of the Liverpool School Board has been made to the Education Department. If any complaint was made by any person interested or aggrieved it would be the duty of the Committee of Council to determine judicially whether the use of the Catechism was unlawful under section

14 (2) of the Education Act, 1870. Under these circumstances, it appears to be undesirable to prejudge the matter by replying to the third paragraph of the Question.

THE AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I wish to ask the right honourable Gentleman a Question of which I have given him private notice; it is whether he can give the House any information as to the terms of the agreement with Russia?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: In answer to the right honourable Gentleman, I have to say that the general tendency and effect of the arrangement is to provide that Great Britain will not oppose Russian railway enterprise in Manchuria, or encourage such enterprise on the part of others, and Russia makes precisely the same stipulation with regard to the basin of the Yang-tze. The full text of the agreement will be laid on the Table as soon as we receive it. There are special stipulations to protect the Niu-chwang Railway.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. MCKENNA (Monmouth, N.): Will the right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury inform us when the Scotch Estimates will be taken?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I propose to take the Scotch Estimates on Friday, commencing with the Education Estimate.

A SHOOTING RANGE NEAR WHITTINGTON BARRACKS.

MR. WARNER (Stafford, Lichfield): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if any progress has been made towards getting a range near Whittington Barracks, Lichfield.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): Yes, sir; the site for a range has been approved, the purchase of the land has been authorised, and negotiations with the owners are now in progress.

ARMOURERS AND BLACKSMITHS AS ENGINE-ROOM ARTIFICERS.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty will he explain why armourers and blacksmiths are not eligible in accordance with the Queen's Regulations to become engine-room artificers; and whether a blacksmith serving in the Royal Navy, and borne on the books of one of Her Majesty's ships at Devonport, has recently been examined with a view to his being appointed as an acting engine-room artificer; if so, will he state what was the result of the examination?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. MACARTNEY, Antrim, S.): Engine-room artificers must be competent workmen of the following trades:—Engine-fitters, copper smiths, boiler-makers, and, in a few cases, engine smiths. Preference is given to engine-fitters who are also turners. Armourers and blacksmiths are therefore ineligible as they do not possess the necessary trade qualifications. A blacksmith serving in the "Colossus" was however, as an exceptional case, permitted to present himself for examination as engine smith (one of the qualified trades) with a view to entry as engine-room artificer, but failed to pass the examination.

PENSIONERS AS GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether the existing regulations permit persons receiving Government pensions to be accepted as contractors for food supplies to the Government; and whether notice on this point is given in the advertisement asking for tenders for food supplies?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: There are no regulations debarring persons receiving Government pensions from being accepted as contractors for food supplies to the Government.

LIGHTKEEPERS' SALARIES.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade will he explain why the light-keepers of Great Britain and Ireland have received no reply to the petition for an increase of salary presented by them in November last; and can he state when a reply may be expected?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): As stated in my reply to the honourable Member for Argyllshire on February 17th, the three general lighthouse authorities have been conferring together upon the question of increased salaries to lighthouse-keepers. I have recently received applications on the subject from the three lighthouse authorities, the last one having only reached me on Saturday. Immediate consideration will be given to these applications.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: Is it not a fact that lighthouse-keepers of Great Britain and Ireland are paid on a lower scale than in other countries?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: That is totally apart from the Question. I have no knowledge of what is paid in other countries.

IRISH TITHE RENT CHARGE BILL.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary whether he can give an undertaking that the Irish Tithe Rent Charge Bill will not be introduced until after Whitsuntide, and that it will not be introduced under the 10 minutes rule?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am afraid I must decline to give the undertaking asked for.

MONEY ORDER OFFICE AND POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK BUSINESS.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, if he will state the number of post offices in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, respectively, at which money order and savings bank business is conducted, and the number of offices in each country at which this business is not transacted?

MR. ANSTRUTHER (for **MR. HANBURY**): The number of post offices at which money order and savings bank business was conducted on the 1st of last month was 12,659, distributed as follows:—England, 9,447; Wales, 824; Scotland, 1,225; Ireland, 1,163. The number of post offices at which such business was not transacted was about 9,000. The distribution of these in various parts of the United Kingdom cannot be stated until the returns now being taken are completed.

LLANSANTFFRAID GLYN CEIRIOG NATIONAL SCHOOL.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the National school at Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog, Denbighshire, was warned by the Department in August last; and, if so, whether he will state the grounds upon which the adverse Report was made?

SIR J. GORST: The school referred to was warned under Article 86 of the Code on account of the marked weakness in the elementary subjects.

LEASES OF SALMON FISHINGS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate, having regard to the fact that the leases of 50 salmon fishings in Scotland expire at Michaelmas next, will he state on what date, and how often, these fishings will be advertised in the public press?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: I am informed by Her Majesty's Office of Woods and Forests that the Crown salmon fishings, the leases of which expire this year, will be advertised for three successive weeks, commencing about the beginning of June.

MILITIA FIELD SERVICE CAP.

MR. WARNER: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if he could state how many Militia battalions will be supplied with the field service cap this year, and which battalions?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: It is expected that all Militia battalions will receive the field service cap in time for this year's training.

IRISH RAILWAYS.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can state the number of miles of railway in Ireland between 1887 and 1897 which received assistance from either Treasury or local Irish rates?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HANBURY, Preston): The number of miles of railway constructed in Ireland between 1887 and 1897 (both years inclusive) with assistance either from the Treasury and local rates or from the Treasury alone was 516½. No figures are available at present as to the miles of railway constructed by the aid of local rates alone. The number would, however, be inconsiderable.

TITHE RENT IN IRELAND.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Cork Co., N.E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will explain why tithe rent-charge payers in Knockmourne parish, county Cork, are now called upon to pay what are termed arrears of tithe, though the Recorder of Cork, on 26th April 1897, reduced the tithe about 2s. 10d. in the pound consequent on the fall in prices of cereals?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The Question relates to lay tithe rent-charges not vested in the Irish Land Commission, the revision of which is affected by a recent decision of the Court of Appeal. I refer the honourable Member to an inquiry on the general Question addressed to me by the honourable Member for the Walton Division of Liverpool.

FIXING FAIR RENT IN IRELAND.

MR. W. MOORE (Antrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the recent rule of the Irish Land Commission under which an applicant to fix a fair rent in that Court is obliged to procure a certificate of valuation of the holding for the hearing before the Court and file same, which has become necessary by reason of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, in order to enable the Court to decide upon the incidence of taxation, thus imposing an additional cost to the suitor of 2s. 6d. in each case; whether he will make representations to the Land Commission to the effect that, as a public Department, they should themselves procure this information in each case free of expense to the parties by a form of requisition addressed to the other public Department, the Commissioners of Valuation in Ireland; and what fund now receives the 2s. 6d. so paid for such valuation?

MR. MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the fact that the Irish Land Commission has issued a new rule by which every applicant for the fixing of a fair rent is obliged to file a certificate of valuation, which must be obtained at the Valuation Office in Dublin at a cost of 2s. 6d.; whether he is aware that certificates of valuation were formerly obtained from the clerks of the various unions, now the clerks of boards of guardians, at a cost of 1s.; and whether, having regard to the fact that this new practice entails an increased expenditure on tenants of holdings who apply to have fair rents fixed, and will form the basis of a claim for

loss of fees by clerks of unions under the provisions of the Local Government Act, steps will be taken to secure a return to the original practice with reference to the issue of certificates of valuation?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The matter is still under consideration, and I would ask the honourable and learned Members to again postpone the Questions until next Monday.

RATES OF CARRIAGE FOR HEAVY GOODS IN IRELAND.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that in a paper read before the London Chamber of Commerce on 8th March it was stated that the carriage of heavy goods per ton per mile was $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in Great Britain, 0.65 in France, $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in Germany, and $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the United States; and whether, seeing that the rates for goods carriage in Ireland are higher than in Great Britain, he will cause inquiries to be made to ascertain the figures and suggest a remedy?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: The maximum rates for goods carriage are not, on the whole, higher in Ireland than in Great Britain. The subject was carefully dealt with by Parliament in 1892, and I am not prepared to re-open it.

COLOUR-SERGEANT GRADY.

MR. WARNER: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War will he explain why Colour-Sergeant Grady, who has been repeatedly recommended by his commanding officer and is otherwise entitled to the good conduct medal, has never received it?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: The honourable Member's description of the man is not sufficient to enable him to be traced for certain. If the honourable Member refers to Colour-Sergeant Grady, of the 53rd Regimental District, the officer in command was informed in October 1896, that his recommendation

might be submitted for consideration a year later, but no further application has been received.

ENFIELD FACTORY.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Under Secretar of State for War if he will state why provision is made in the Estimates for 1899-1900 for increased lodging allowances at the Enfield Factory?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: There is no lodging allowances for Enfield Factory. It is not clear to what item the honourable Member refers.

MULRANNY FORGERY TRIAL.

MR. DAVITT (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in reference to his statement that the Mulranny forgery charge was investigated at Sligo, he is aware that in the county of Sligo, where there is a population of 89,000 Roman Catholics and 8,500 Protestants, the jury who tried the accused sergeant was composed exclusively of Protestant Unionists, and that every Roman Catholic juror who came to the box was challenged by the Crown Solicitor, Mr. Malachy Kelly, who was supposed to be conducting the prosecution; and that one of the jurors stated openly in the box that the jury had made up their minds for an acquittal before hearing the evidence of Constable Curtin, who was the most important witness for the prosecution?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The respective numbers of the Roman Catholic and Protestant population of Sligo are correctly stated. Those of the Roman Catholic religion who are qualified to be jurors are, like their Protestant fellows, placed upon the panel in their regular rotation according to the provisions of the statute. The jury panel in the present instance was prepared in the ordinary course for Winter Assizes without any reference to Sullivan's case, and I believe before it was known that the case would be tried at the Winter Assizes. No record is kept of the religion of jurors who serve or of those who are set aside. In exercising his right of challenge, the Crown Solicitor acted in strict conformity with the directions contained

in the circular of February, 1894, issued by the late Government to Crown solicitors, and was not influenced in any way by the religious or political opinions of the jurors. No inquiries were made by the Crown Solicitor into the religious or political views of jurors. Not before Constable Curtin was examined, but after he and all the other witnesses for the Crown had been examined and cross-examined, and the Crown case had been closed, and the prisoner's counsel had stated the prisoner's case, the jury, through their foreman, and acting within their rights, informed the judge that they had on the Crown case made up their minds to acquit the prisoner. I may mention that a civil action has been brought by the prosecution in the criminal trial against the accused for libel in respect of the very letter upon which the prosecution was based with the view of having the question of the authenticity of the letter determined, and that, although the criminal trial took place in December, the honourable Member's question in reference to it had only been asked since notice of trial in the civil action has been served. I think that the honourable Member will see that Questions such as this, with whatever intention they may be put, are in the result calculated to prejudice the trial, and are unfair to at least one of the litigants.

WOMEN AS RATE COLLECTORS.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether an order has recently been issued by the Local Government Board declaring that no woman shall be qualified to be appointed as rate collector?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The General Order issued with reference to the poor rate collectors appointed under the Local Government Act includes this provision among others.

ORPHAN HOMES AND SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION.

SIR C. CAMERON: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that in consequence of parish and education rates having been levied on

the Orphan Homes of Scotland, the private school in connection with those Homes in which till now about 1,000 children inmates of the Homes have been gratuitously educated, has been closed, and that 800 children formally presented at Kilmalcolm Public School on Friday last were met by the clerk to the School Board, who stated that he was authorised to refuse them admission; and whether the Scottish Education Department proposes to take any steps to compel the School Board to provide education for the children in question?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: The Scottish Education Department have this day received a letter from the head of the Orphan Homes on this matter, and have communicated with the School Board on the subject. I am not prepared to say in reply to a Question what course the Department may ultimately take.

SCOTTISH EDUCATION REPORT.

MR. T. SHAW (Hawick Burghs): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate when the Report of the Committee of Council on Scottish Education for the past year, together with relative Return of school expenditure, statistics, etc., will be printed and circulated among Members?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: The statistical tables have already been laid on the Table, and their distribution rests with the printers. The Report of the Committee of Council is in course of preparation, but it is not possible to comment upon some matters to which it is undesirable to refer until a somewhat later date. All the essential information is given in the statistical tables.

THE ORDNANCE FACTORY, BIRMINGHAM.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if he will state the maximum and minimum number of workmen engaged at the Ordnance Factory, Birmingham, during the financial year 1898-9; and will he say how many men

are employed in the factory at the present time?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: The are as follows:—Maximum number in 1898-9, 461; minimum number in 1898-9, 409; present number employed, 445.

ORDNANCE FACTORY, ENFIELD.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if he will state the maximum and minimum number of workmen engaged at the Ordnance Factory, Enfield, during the financial year 1898-9; and will he say how many men are employed in the factory at the present time?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: The figures are as follows:—Maximum number in 1898-9, 2,277; Minimum number in 1898-9, 2,163; present number employed, 2,230.

CHAPLAIN AND ORGANIST AT ENFIELD AND WALTHAM.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if he will explain why provision is made in the Estimates for the payment of a chaplain and organist at the Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield, and for a chaplain at Waltham?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: Ever since the origin of the factories at Enfield and Waltham allowances have been voted by Parliament to assist in providing for the spiritual wants of the workpeople employed in them. In the case of Enfield, the payment is made to the Vicar of St. James, Enfield Highway, for providing for the performance of regular services at the Factory Chapel. In the case of Waltham, the money is paid to the Vicar's fund for the provision of curates to minister to the employees. In the case of the organist at Enfield, as the chapel belongs to the Government, the Vicar is not under the necessity of providing an organist, and a grant of £20 is made towards the salary of the latter, the congregation making up the full salary.

ESSEX MILITIA COMMANDING OFFICER.

Mr. WARNER (Stafford, Lichfield): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if there is any special reason why the officers of the Essex Militia battalions have been passed over and a commanding officer brought in from outside to command the 3rd Battalion Essex Regiment, as the new commanding officer has no connection with the Militia, and there were officers with long service in the Militia battalions qualified to command?

Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS: The Secretary of State has acted in this matter on the recommendation of the successive general officers who have been in command of the Eastern District, which recommendations were supported by the Commander-in-Chief.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the Department will grant a return of the several Voluntary schools in England and Wales the subscriptions or other contributions to which have diminished since the passing of the Voluntary Schools Act, 1897; giving the amounts contributed for each school in the years ending August 1897 and 1898 respectively?

SIR J. GORST: The Return which the honourable Member desires could not be given without an amount of labour wholly disproportionate to the result.

A MEDICAL OFFICER TO THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, whether, in view of the public health questions which arise in connection with the attendance of children at the elementary schools, more particularly in reference to the spread of infectious diseases, together with the proper supervision of the centres for defective children, the deaf and the blind, the health and superannuation of the teachers, etc., it is proposed to appoint a medical officer to the Education Department?

SIR J. GORST: The Committee of Council have no present intention of appointing such an officer. The schools for blind and deaf children, and for defective children, are under the supervision of an inspector who is a qualified medical man. The Department proposes to use, for the purposes of the Superannuation Act, the local medical officers employed by the General Post Office and the Civil Service Commissioners.

VACCINATION.

Mr. LOGAN (Leicester, Harborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is aware that the Justices of the Whittlesea Petty Sessional Division of Cambridgeshire have refused a certificate of exemption under The Vaccination Act, 1898, to Mr. G. Goude, who applied on two occasions, on the ground that they did not feel inclined to grant it; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: I find on inquiry that it is not the case that Mr. Goude was refused a certificate of exemption on the ground suggested, but that the justices were unanimous in deciding that the applicant had failed to satisfy them, as required by statute that he conscientiously believed that vaccination would be prejudicial to the health of his child.

DANGEROUS TRADES COMMISSION.

SIR H. VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been drawn to the statement made on the 26th instant by the Union Secretary to the Federated Trades, in a public meeting held in Central Sheffield of hand file-cutters, as to the difficulties which will be caused to the file-cutters of finding places in which to follow their occupation, as no one would expend the money required to erect new shops under the new regulations proposed in the recommendations of the Dangerous Trades Commission; and under such circumstances, whether he will suspend the issue of any new orders until fresh inquiry has been made, after full notice to masters as well as to the grinders, cutters, and others whose interests are money required to erect new shops affected?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: I have seen the newspaper report of the meeting referred to, which my honourable Friend has been good enough to send me, but have not yet myself received any communication from the workers in the file-cutting industry. It is clear, I think, that the conditions under which file-cutting by hand is carried on are far from satisfactory, and I have communicated the recommendations of the Committee to the owners of the file-cutting shops, and asked for their observations. I have not yet decided what form the Home Office action will take; but before any of the Committee's recommendations can be enforced, special Rules will be necessary, and the consideration of the Rules will give ample opportunity for the expression of the views of all persons affected.

REINSTATEMENT OF MARY GOLDRICK TO HER HOLDING.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in March 1898 the bailiff on the estate of Lord Annaly, at Rathcline, County Longford, made an offer of reinstatement to an evicted tenant, named Mary Goldrick, upon the payment of one and a-half years' rent, and that, although the offer was accepted and the money lodged in the National Bank at Ballymahon, a workman in the employment of the bailiff, named Moughty, was subsequently placed in possession and still remains in occupation of the farm; and whether inquiry will be made into the circumstances of the case with a view to the completion of the agreement entered into with Mary Goldrick?

MR. G. BALFOUR: This is not a matter calling for the interference of the Executive Government. However, I have made inquiry and am informed that Mary Goldrick did not accept the offer of reinstatement made to her by the estate bailiff, as she could give no security and had not lodged the amount in the bank. The new tenant was not a workman of the bailiff, but is a carpenter and boat builder by trade. He paid arrears of rent amounting to £8, and, moreover, paid to the previous occupant of the house and farm a sum of £30.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

AGED DESERVING POOR.

Mr. Anstruther nominated a Member of the Committee.—(*Sir William Walrond.*)

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That Mr. Chaplin be one other member of the Committee."—(*Sir William Walrond.*)

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said he had been under the impression that an Amendment was to be moved to the effect that the Colonial Secretary should take the Chairmanship of the Committee. He desired to say one word in the hope that that arrangement would still be carried out. Many honourable Members were keenly interested in this subject, and, although he had not the honour of being on the Committee, he trusted that it would be successful. They were, indeed, most anxious that it should succeed, for they felt that the question of Chairman of this Committee was one of immense importance. He had worked for many years to bring the question to a practical issue long before it became a political question, and the decision of Chairman of this third and last Committee would be of very great importance to the movement. The Chairman should have a great knowledge of poor law questions and the social condition of the people, and be a kind of expert on the financial difficulties of the Old-Age Pension schemes, which were very great. He hoped he was not going too far when he said that it would test the qualities of the very best man on the Government Bench to conduct the Committee efficiently and successfully. The Colonial Secretary had made the subject his own, and therefore it was very desirable that he should be a Member of the Committee. If the Committee failed to solve the problem, he ventured to think it would be a very great blow to the Government. Both Parties were pledged to consider the question, but the Party at present in power had a very large majority, and he felt that if the question could be carried out in such a way as would promote thrift and self-reliance amongst the people they were bound to carry it out. No doubt the Colonial Secretary would say that he had a great deal to do. He had, but

he had been occupied lately with the Small Houses (Acquisition of Ownership) Bill, which no doubt was an excellent Measure, but he would ask him whether he was really off with the old love of pensions and on with the new of small houses. They could not for a moment suppose he was on with both. The credit of the Government was concerned in this Committee, and, as he himself wished the Committee to be successful, he suggested that the Colonial Secretary should be a Member and Chairman of the Committee.

*MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member cannot move the insertion of the name of the right honourable Gentleman, because he has not given notice of any such Motion.

MR. BARTLEY said he would put himself in order by moving to leave out the name of Mr. Anstruther.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am put in some difficulty by the Speaker's ruling in answering the speech of my honourable Friend, for the speech has not been at all directed to the leaving out of one name, but to the putting in of another, which my honourable Friend cannot move. If I answer the argument I shall not be dealing with the Motion. But I may, perhaps, say that this is an entirely unprecedented course. I have known many Motions for the omission of a name, but the Motion to insert a name is, so far as I know, entirely novel. It would be invidious and quite out of place to discuss the respective qualifications of the 670 Members of the House who are, no doubt, competent to serve on the Committee. With regard to my right hon-

ourable Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies, it is perfectly true that he has, more than anyone else, in or out of this House, identified himself with this question, and the Committee would be great gainers if he would serve. But my right honourable Friend has got already upon his shoulders as heavy a load of official responsibility as anyone of his colleagues, and to ask him to undertake, day by day, the work of a Committee which, however closely related to his general views of public policy, has nothing to do with the office he holds, seems to me to be asking my right honourable Friend to accept a burden which ought not to be put upon him. The question of the Chairmanship of the Committee does not arise on the Motion before the House. It is for the Committee, and the Committee alone, to decide which of its Members shall preside over them. No doubt it would have been to the advantage of everybody concerned if my right honourable Friend could have joined the Committee, but it is impossible to ask him to undertake that immense load in addition to what he already bears.

MR. BARTLEY said he had no desire to press his Motion.

The name of Mr. Anstruther was then agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put—

"That Mr. Chaplin be one other Member of the Committee."

MR. WARNER (Stafford, Lichfield) opposed.

The House divided:—Ayes 254; Noes 82.—(Division List No. 109.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
Aird, John
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Austin, Sir J. (Yorkshire)
Bagot, Capt. J. FitzRoy
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Ballie, J. E. B. (Inverness)
Baird, John G. Alexander
Baker, Sir John
Balcarras, Lord
Baldwin, Alfred

Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch.)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. B. (Clack.)
Banbury, Frederick George
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Barton, Dunbar Plunkett
Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benj.
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Begg, Ferdinand Faithfull
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Beresford, Lord Charles
Bethell, Commander

Bhownaggee, Sir M. M.
Biddulph, Michael
Bill, Charles
Billson, Alfred
Bolitho, Thomas Berford
Bonsor, Hy. Cosmo Orme
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Bowles, Capt. H. F. (Middle.)
Brassey, Albert
Broderick, Rt. Hn. St. John
Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
Burt, Thomas

Butcher, John George
 Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
 Carlile, William Walter
 Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson
 Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
 Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
 Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, E.)
 Cecil, Lord H. (Greenwich)
 Chaloner, Capt. R. G. W.
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Bir.)
 Chamberlain, J. A. (Worc'r)
 Chelsea, Viscount
 Cochran, Hn. T. H. A. E.
 Coddington, Sir William
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
 Colston, C. E. H. Athole
 Cook, F. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Cooke, C. W. R. (Hereford)
 Corbett, A. C. (Glasgow)
 Courtney, Rt. Hon. L. H.
 Cox, Irwin E. B. (Harrow)
 Cranborne, Viscount
 Cross, Herbert S. (Bolton)
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalbiac, Colonel Philip Hugh
 Dalkeith, Earl of
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Denny, Colonel
 Dickson-Poynder, Sir J. P.
 Digby, J. K. D. Wingfield-
 Dixon-Hardland, Sir F. D.
 Dorington, Sir J. Edward
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers
 Doxford, William Theodore
 Drage, Geoffrey
 Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
 Dyke, Rt. Hn. Sir W. Hart
 Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
 Elliot, Hn. A. R. Douglas
 Ellis, John Edward
 Evans, S. T. (Glamorgan)
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn E.
 Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Man.)
 Firbank, Joseph Thomas
 Fisher, William Hayes
 FitzGerald, Sir R. Penrose-
 Flannery, Sir Fortescue
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Foster, Sir W. (Derby Co.)
 Fowler, Rt. Hn. Sir Henry
 Fry, Lewis
 Galloway, William Johnson
 Garfit, William
 Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H. (City of Lond.)
 Gilliat, John Saunders
 Gladstone, Rt. Hn. H. J.
 Godson, Sir Augustus F.
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gorat, Rt. Hn. Sir J. E.
 Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. Geo.'s)
 Goulding, Edward Alfred
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Green, W. D. (Wednesbury)
 Greene, W. R. (Cambs.)
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Gunter, Colonel
 Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord G.
 Hanson, Sir Reginald

Hardy, Laurence
 Hazell, Walter
 Heath, James
 Heaton, John Henniker
 Hemphill, Rt. Hn. C. H.
 Henderson, Alexander
 Hickman, Sir Alfred
 Hoare, E. B. (Hampstead)
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Hobbhouse, Henry
 Holland, Hn. L. R. (Bow)
 Howard, Joseph
 Howell, William Tudor
 Hoxier, Hon. J. H. Cecil
 Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
 Hudson, Geo. Bickersteth
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
 Johnson-Ferguson, J. E.
 Johnston, Wm. (Belfast)
 Johnstone, H. (Sussex)
 Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)
 Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.
 Kimber, Henry
 King, Sir Henry Seymour
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawrence, Sir E. D. (Corn.)
 Lawrence, W. F. (Liverpool)
 Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks.)
 Lea, Sir T. (Londonderry)
 Leigh-Bennett, H. Currie
 Leighton, Stanley
 Llewellyn, E. H. (Somerset)
 Lockwood, Lt. Col. A. R.
 Loder, Gerald W. Erakine
 Long, Col. C. W. (Evesham)
 Long, Rt. Hn. W. (Liverpool)
 Lopes, Hy. Yarde Buller
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowther, Rt. Hn. J. (Kent)
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Lyell, Sir Leonard
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdona, John Cumming
 Maclean, James Mackenzie
 Maclure, Sir John William
 McCalmont, H. L. B. (Cambs.)
 McIver, Sir L. (Edinburgh, W.)
 Marks, Harry H.
 Maxwell, Rt. Hn. Sir H. E.
 Mellor, Col. (Lancashire)
 Mellor, Rt. Hn. J. W. (Yorks.)
 Melville, Beresford Valentine
 Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
 Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
 Milbank, Sir Powlett C. J.
 Milward, Colonel Victor
 Moon, Edward Robert Percy
 More, R. J. (Shropshire)
 Morgan, J. L. (Carmarthen)
 Morton, A. H. A. (Deptford)
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. G. (Bute)
 Murray, Col. W. (Bath)
 Newark, Viscount
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Staff.
 O'Neill, Hon. R. Torrens
 Orr-Ewing, Chas. Lindsay
 Palmer, Geo. W. (Reading)
 Paulton, James Mellor
 Pease, A. E. (Cleveland)
 Pease, H. P. (Darlington)
 Pease, J. A. (Northumb.)

Pender, Sir James
 Penn, John
 Percy, Earl
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Pretymann, Ernest George
 Priestley, Sir W. O. (Edin.)
 Purvis, Robert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Rasch, Major F. Carne
 Redmond, William (Clare)
 Renshaw, Charles Bine
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Ridley, Rt. Hn. Sir M. W.
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. T.
 Rothschild, Hon. Lionel W.
 Round, James
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Chelt.)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Samuel, Hy. S. (Limehouse)
 Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, Wm. Ed. T.
 Shaw, Thos. (Hawick B.)
 Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renf.)
 Sidebottom, T. H. (Stalybr.)
 Sidebottom, Wm. (Derbysh.)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Skewes-Cox, Thomas
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Spencer, Ernest
 Stanley, Hn. A. (Ormskirk)
 Stanley, E. J. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Hy. H. (Lambeth)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stephens, Hy. Charles
 Stewart, Sir M. J. M. Taggart
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir J. M.
 Strauss, Arthur
 Strutt, Hon. C. Hedley
 Sturt, Hon. H. Napier
 Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Uni.)
 Thorburn, Walter
 Tollemache, Henry James
 Tomlinson, W. E. Murray
 Tritton, Charles Ernest
 Usborne, Thomas
 Valentia, Viscount
 Verney, Hon. R. Greville
 Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. H.
 Wallace, Robert (Edinburgh)
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, R. G. St. Pancras
 Webster, Sir R. E. (I. of Wight)
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Williams, Col. R. (Dorset)
 Williams, J. Powell (Birm.)
 Willox, Sir J. Archibald
 Wilson-Todd, W. H. (Yorks)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wolf, Gustav Wilhelm
 Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
 Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
 Young, Robert Armstrong
 Young, Com. (Berks, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Allison, Robert Andrew
 Ambrose, Robert
 Ashton, Thomas Gair
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Blake, Edward
 Bowles, T. G. (King's Lynn)
 Brunner, Sir J. Tomlinson
 Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
 Caldwell, James
 Cameron, Sir C. (Glasgow)
 Carvill, Patrick G. Hamilton
 Channing, Francis Allston
 Crombie, John William
 Daly, James
 Dillon, John
 Donelan, Captain A.
 Douglas, C. M. (Lanark)
 Duckworth, James
 Evans, Sir F. H. (South'ton)
 Farquharson, Dr. Robert
 Fox, Dr. Joseph Francis
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Gold, Charles
 Gourley, Sir E. Temperley
 Gurdon, Sir Wm. Brampton
 Harcourt, Rt. Hn. Sir Wm.
 Harwood, George
 Hayne, Rt. Hn. Chas. Seale-

Holland, W. H. (York, W.R.)
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Humphreys-Owen, A. C.
 Jacoby, James Alfred
 Joicey, Sir James
 Jones, W. (Carnarvonshire)
 Kearley, Hudson E.
 Kinloch, Sir J. G. Smyth
 Kitson, Sir James
 Labouchere, Henry
 Lawson, Sir W. (Cumb'land)
 Leng, Sir John
 Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Lewis, John Herbert
 Macaleese, Daniel
 M'Hugh, P. A. (Leitrim)
 Maddison, Fred.
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
 Montagu, Sir S. (Whitechapel)
 Morley, Rt Hn J. (Montrose)
 Morton, E. J. C. (Devonport)
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Norton, Capt. Cecil William
 Nussey, Thomas Willans
 O'Connor, J. (Wicklow, W.)
 Oldroyd, Mark
 Pease, Sir J. W. (Durham)
 Perks, Robert William
 Pirie, Duncan V.

Power, Patrick Joseph
 Randell, David
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Roberts, J. Bryn (Eifon)
 Roberts, J. H. (Denbighs.)
 Robertson, E. (Dundee)
 Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarsh.)
 Smith, Samuel (Flint)
 Soames, Arthur Wellealey
 Souttar, Robinson
 Spicer, Albert
 Stevenson, Francis S.
 Strachey, Edward
 Sullivan, D. (Westmeath)
 Tennant, Harold John
 Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Ure, Alexander
 Wallace, Robert (Perth)
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Weir, James Galloway
 Williams, J. Carvell (Notta.)
 Wills, Sir William Henry
 Wilson, John (Govan)
 Woods, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Warner and Mr.
 McKenna.

The name of Mr. Chaplin was then added.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That Mr. Cripps be one other member of the Committee."—(Sir William Walrond.)

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said that when he came down to the House he was under the impression that the nomination of the Committee would be the first Order of the Day, and was quite unaware that it would come under the preliminary notices, and be subject to the rule allowing a speech of 10 minutes for and against. The situation was so embarrassing that if it were possible he would move the adjournment of the Debate. He conceived that under such a Motion Members would be relieved from their embarrassment, and there would be a Division somewhat different in character from the one just declared. It was useless to disguise the fact. It was recognised on all hands, and, with no desire to be disrespectful to the honourable Members who were proposed for the Committee, a Committee so constituted would be quite unequal to the work to be entrusted to it. He was sorry this should be so, and

he had known former occasions when in similar circumstances a Committee was constituted in another form. In the situation in which they were now it was impossible to make such a proposal, because Members were debarred from moving the adjournment of the House, a Motion which would produce a Debate in which the judgment of the House would be manifested. It rested with the Speaker, if he might respectfully remind the right honourable Gentleman, to determine whether there should be a Division on the question of adjournment if it appeared that the Rule caused public inconvenience. The whole question of the composition of the Committee must then be brought up in proper form. In the present position, the House could only divide upon names, and in the end a Committee would be appointed, in respect to which he was satisfied he expressed the feeling of nine-tenths of the House when he said it would be quite unequal to the very grave and weighty business to be entrusted to it.

*MR. SPEAKER: I will put the Question of adjournment because a right honourable Gentleman of position in the House, with apparently substantial support, desires it should be put, and I think

it is not unreasonable that the House should have the opportunity of saying if the Debate should be adjourned or not. But I protest against the suggestion that in so doing I express any opinion of my own.

Question put—

"That this Debate be now adjourned."

The House divided:—Ayes 136; Noes 218.—(Division List No. 110.)

AYES.

Allison, Robert Andrew
Ambrose, Robert
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
Baker, Sir John
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.)
Barlow, John Emmott
Bartley, George C. T.
Billson, Alfred
Blake, Edward
Bowles, T. Gibson (King's Lynn)
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Bryce, Rt. Hn. James
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Sir Chas. (Glasgow)
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Causton, Richard Knight
Channing, Francis Allston
Clancy, John Joseph
Clough, Walter Owen
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Crombie, John William
Daly, James
Dilke, Rt. Hn. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Douglas, Charles M. (Lanark)
Duckworth, James
Dyke, Rt. Hn. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hn. A. Ralph Douglas
Ellis, John Edward
Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)
Evans, Sir Francis H. (South'ton)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Fowler, Rt. Hn. Sir Henry
Fox, Dr. Joseph Francis
Galloway, William Johnson
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herb. Jno.
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gold, Charles

Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gourley, Sir Edwd. Temperley
Gunter, Colonel
Gurdon, Sir Wm. Brampton
Haldane, Richard Burdon
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. Sir Wm.
Harwood, George
Hayne, Rt. Hn. Chas. Seale
Hazell, Walter
Hedderwick, Thos. Chas. H.
Hemphill, Rt. Hn. Chas. H.
Hobhouse, Henry
Holland, Wm. H. (York, W. R.)
Horniman, Frederick John
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Johnson-Ferguson, Jabez Edw.
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, David Brynmor (Swansea)
Jones, Wm. (Carnarvonshire)
Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kinloch, Sir John George Smyth
Kitson, Sir James
Labouchere, Henry
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb'ld.)
Leng, Sir John
Leuty, Thomas Richmond
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Lyell, Sir Leonard
Macaleese, Daniel
McArthur, Wm. (Cornwall)
McKenna, Reginald
Maddison, Fred.
Mappin, Sir Fredk. Thorpe
Mellor, Rt. Hn. J. W. (Yorks.)
Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
Montagu, Sir S. (Whitechapel)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morley, Rt. Hn. Jno. (Montrose)
Morton, Edw. J. C. (Devonport)
Moulton, John Fletcher
Norton, Capt. Cecil Wm.
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)

O'Connor, Jas. (Wicklow, W.)
Oldroyd, Mark
Palmer, Geo. Wm. (Reading)
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, Alfred E. (Cleveland)
Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
Pease, Sir Jos. W. (Durham)
Perks, Robert William
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, Robert John
Randell, David
Redmond, Jno. E. (Waterford)
Renshaw, Charles Bine
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Roberts, Jno. H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Edmund (Dundee)
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
Sinclair, Capt. John (Forfarsh.)
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Soames, Arthur Wellealey
Souttar, Robinson
Spicer, Albert
Stevenson, Francis S.
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jno. M.
Strachey, Edward
Strauss, Arthur
Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
Tennant, Harold John
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Wallace, Robert (Edinburgh)
Wallace, Robert (Perth)
Warner, Thos. Courtenay T.
Wedderburn, Sir William
Weir, James Galloway
Williams, Jno. Carvell (Notts.)
Willis, Sir William Henry
Wilson, John (Govan)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Woods, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Mr. Courtney and Mr.
Strutt.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
Aird, John
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hn. John
Bagot, Capt. Joceline FitzRoy
Bailey, James (Walsworth)
Baillie, James E. B. (Inverness)
Baird, John Geo. Alexander
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. Gerald W. (Leeds)

Banbury, Frederick George
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Barton, Dunbar Plunket
Bathurst, Hn. Allen Benjamin
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Begg, Ferdinand Faithfull
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Beresford, Lord Charles
Bhownaggee, Sir M. M.
Biddulph, Michael
Bigwood, James
Bill, Charles

Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Boulnois, Edmund
Bowles, Capt. H. F. (Middlesex)
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hn. St. John
Butcher, John George
Carlile, William Walter
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbyshire)
Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, E.)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.

Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
 Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r.)
 Chaplin, Rt. Hn. Henry
 Chelsea, Viscount
 Cechrane, Hr. Thos. H. A. E.
 Coddington, Sir William
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Collings, Rt. Hn. Jesse
 Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
 Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
 Cooke, C. W. Radcliffe (Heref'd)
 Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
 Cox, Irwin Edw. B. (Harrow)
 Cranborne, Viscount
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton)
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalbiac, Colonel Philip Hugh
 Dalkeith, Earl of
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Davenport, W. Bromley-
 Dickson-Poynder, Sir Jno. P.
 Digby, Jno. K. D. Wingfield-
 Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
 Dorington, Sir John Edward
 Doughty, George
 Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers
 Doxford, William Theodore
 Drage, Geoffrey
 Duncombe, Hn. Hubert V.
 Fardell, Sir T. George
 Fellowes, Hn. Ailwyn Edward
 Ferguson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manc'r.)
 Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
 Firbank, Joseph Thomas
 Fisher, William Hayes
 FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose-
 Flannery, Sir Fortescue
 Fletcher, Sir Henry
 Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Fry, Lewis
 Garfit, William
 Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H. (C. of Lond.)
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Gilliat, John Saunders
 Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
 Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. George's)
 Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
 Green, Walford D. (Wednes'y.)
 Greene, W. Raymond- (Cams.)
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord George
 Hanson, Sir Reginald
 Hardy, Laurence
 Heath, James
 Heaton, John Henniker
 Henderson, Alexander
 Hoare, Edw. Brodie (Hampstead)
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Holland, Hn. Lionel R. (Bow)

Howard, Joseph
 Howell, William Tudor
 Hozier, Hn. Jas. Henry Cecil
 Hubbard, Hn. Evelyn
 Hudson, George Bickersteth
 Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
 Johnston, William (Belfast)
 Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
 Kimber, Henry
 King, Sir Henry Seymour
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawrence, Sir E. Durning (Corn.)
 Lawrence, Wm. F. (Liverpool)
 Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
 Lea, Sir Thos. (Londonderry)
 Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
 Leighton, Stanley
 Llewellyn, Evan H. (Somerset)
 Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
 Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
 Long, Col. Chas. W. (Evesham)
 Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (L'pool.)
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowther, Rt. Hn. James (Kent)
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdonald, John Cumming
 Maclean, James Mackenzie
 Maclure, Sir John William
 Martin, Richard Biddulph
 McCalmont, H. L. B. (Cams.)
 McIver, Sir Lewis (Edin., W.)
 Marks, Harry H.
 Maxwell, Rt. Hn. Sir Herb. E.
 Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
 Melville, Beresford Valentine
 Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
 Middlemore, Jno. Throgmorton
 Milner, Sir Frederick George
 Milward, Colonel Victor
 Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
 More, Robt. Jasper (Shropshire)
 Morton, Arthur H. A. (Deptf'd.)
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. Graham (Bute)
 Murray, Col. Wm. (Bath)
 Newark, Viscount
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford
 O'Neill, Hn. Robert Torrens
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
 Pease, Herb. Pike (Darlington)
 Pender, Sir James
 Penn, John
 Percy, Earl
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Pretzman, Ernest George
 Priestley, Sir W. Overend (Edin.)
 Furvis, Robert
 Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
 Redmond, William (Clare)
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Ridley, Rt. Hn. Sir Matthew W.
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
 Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
 Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
 Round, James
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Chelt'ham.)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrrone)
 Samuel, Henry S. (Limehouse)
 Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
 Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renfrew)
 Sidebottom, T. H. (Stalybridge)
 Sidebottom, Wm. (Derbysh.)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Skewes-Cox, Thomas
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
 Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Spencer, Ernest
 Stanley, Hn. Arthur (Ormakirk)
 Stanley, Edw. Jas. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Henry M. (Lambeth)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Stephens, Henry Charles
 Stewart, Sir Mark J. M. Taggart
 Sturt, Hn. Humphry Napier
 Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Ox. Univ.)
 Thorburn, Walter
 Tollemache, Henry James
 Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray
 Tritton, Charles Ernest
 Osborne, Thomas
 Valentia, Viscount
 Verney, Hn. Richard Greville
 Warde, Lt.-Col. C. E. (Kent)
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, Sir R. E. (I. of Wight)
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Whitmore, Charles Algernon
 Williams, Col. R. (Dorset)
 Williams, Jos. Powell (Birm.)
 Willox, Sir John Archibald
 Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks.)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
 Yerburch, Robert Armstrong
 Young, Commander (Berks, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther.

The name of Mr. Cripps was then added to the Committee.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

On the question that Mr. Davitt's name be added,

Mr. J. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) expressed the opinion that the First Lord of the Treasury was stretching the Ten Minutes Rule too far, by putting under it a question for which it was never intended.

The name was added to the Committee.

Motion made, and Question put—

"That Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice be one other member of the Committee."

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) said he objected to the acceptance of the name. This Committee was not one on which any self-respecting Liberal ought to serve. It was nothing more than a transparent sham, for if it had any object at all, its only object was the rehabilitation of the Secretary for the Colonies. They used to hear about Ministerial responsibility—

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The honourable baronet must confine himself to the question whether the name should be added.

SIR W. LAWSON said he was quite satisfied. He had said quite enough.

Question put—

"That Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice be one other Member of the Committee."

The House divided:—Ayes 280; Noes 77.—(Division List No. 111.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Cpt. Sir Alex. F.
Aird, John
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Atkinson, Rt. Hn. John
Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
Bagot, Capt. Joceline FitzRoy
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Baillie, Jas. E. B. (Inverness)
Baird, John Geo. Alexander
Balcarras, Lord
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. Gerald W. (Leeds)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.)
Banbury, Frederick George
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Bartley, George C. T.
Barton, Dunbar Plunket
Bathurst, Hn. Allen Benjamin
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Begg, Ferdinand Faithfull
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Beresford, Lord Charles
Bethell, Commander
Bhownaggee, Sir M. M.
Biddulph, Michael
Bigwood, James
Bill, Charles
Bolitho, Thomas Bedford
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
Boulnois, Edmund
Bowles, Capt. H. F. (Middlesex)
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hn. St. John
Brown, Alexander H.
Bryce, Rt. Hn. James
Burt, Thomas
Butcher, John George
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carlike, William Walter
Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
Cecil, Evelyn (Hertford, E.)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
Chaloner, Capt. R. G. W.
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r)
Channing, Francis Allston

Chaplin, Rt. Hn. Henry
Chelsea, Viscount
Clancy, John Joseph
Cochrane, Hn. Thos. H. A. E.
Coddington, Sir William
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Rt. Hn. Jesse
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
Cooke, C. W. Radcliffe (Heref'd)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Courtney, Rt. Hn. Leonard H.
Cox, Irwin Edw. B. (Harrow)
Cranborne, Viscount
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton)
Curzon, Viscount
Dalbiac, Colonel Philip Hugh
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, W. Bromley-
Denny, Colonel
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred. Dixon
Dorington, Sir John Edward
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers
Doxford, William Theodore
Drage, Geoffrey
Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
Dyke, Rt. Hn. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hn. A. Ralph Douglas
Ellis, John Edward
Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fellowes, Hn. Ailwyn Edwd.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manch'r)
Finch, George H.
Finlay, Sir Robt. Bannatyne
Firbank, Joseph Thomas
Fisher, William Hayes
Fitzgerald, Sir Robt. Penrose
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Fletcher, Sir Henry
Flower, Ernest
Folkestone, Viscount
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)

Fowler, Rt. Hn. Sir Henry
Fry, Lewis
Galloway, William Johnson
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H. (C. of Lond.)
Giles, Charles Tyrrell
Gilliat, John Saunders
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Goldsworthy, Major-General
Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. George's)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gourley, Sir Edw. Temperley
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
Green, Walford D. (Wednes'y.)
Greene, W. Raymond (Cams.)
Gull, Sir Cameron
Gunter, Colonel
Haldane, Richard Burdon
Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord George
Hanson, Sir Reginald
Hardy, Laurence
Hayne, Rt. Hn. Charles Seale-
Hazell, Walter
Heath, James
Heaton, John Henniker
Hemphill, Rt. Hn. Chas. H.
Henderson, Alexander
Hoare, Edw. Brodie (Hamptsd.)
Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
Hobhouse, Henry
Holland, Hn. Lionel R. (Bow)
Holland, Wm. H. (York, W. R.)
Howard, Joseph
Howell, William Tudor
Hozier, Hn. James Henry Cecil
Hubbard, Hn. Evelyn
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
Jessel, Capt. Herb. Merton
Johnson-Ferguson, James Edw.
Johnston, William (Belfast)
Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
Jones, Wm. (Carnarvonshire)
Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.
Kimber, Henry
King, Sir Henry Seymour
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Lawrence, Sir E. Durning (Corn)
Lawrence, Wm. F. (Liverpool)

Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
 Lea, Sir Thos. (Londonderry)
 Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
 Leighton, Stanley
 Llewellyn, Evan H. (Somerset)
 Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
 Long, Col. Chas. W. (Evesham)
 Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (L'pool.)
 Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
 Lorne, Marquess of
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowther, Rt. Hn. Jas. (Kent)
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Lubbock, Rt. Hn. Sir John
 Lucas-Shadwell, William
 Lyell, Sir Leonard
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdona, John Cumming
 Maclean, James Mackenzie
 Macleure, Sir John William
 McCalmont, H. L. B. (Cambs.)
 McIver, Sir Lewis (Edin. W.)
 Maple, Sir John Blundell
 Marks, Harry H.
 Martin, Richard Biddulph
 Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
 Mellor, Rt. Hn. J. W. (Yorks.)
 Melville, Beresford Valentine
 Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
 Middlemore, Jno. Throgmorton
 Milbank, Sir Powlett Chas. Jno.
 Milward, Colonel Victor
 Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
 More, Robt. Jasper (Shropshire)
 Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
 Morton, Arth. H. A. (Deptford)
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. Graham (Bute)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Newark, Viscount
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Nicholson, William Graham
 Northcote, Hn. Sir H. Stafford
 O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)

O'Neill, Hn. Robert Torrens
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
 Palmer, Geo. Wm. (Reading)
 Paulton, James Mellor
 Pease, Alfred E. (Cleveland)
 Pease, Herb. Pike (Darlington)
 Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
 Pender, Sir James
 Penn, John
 Percy, Earl
 Pierpoint, Robert
 Pirie, Duncan V.
 Platt-Higgins, Frederick
 Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Pretymann, Ernest George
 Priestley, Sir W. Overend (Edin)
 Purvis, Robert
 Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
 Rankin, Sir James
 Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
 Redmond, Jno. E. (Waterford)
 Redmond, William (Clare)
 Renshaw, Charles Bine
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Rickett, J. Compton
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
 Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
 Robertson, Herb. (Hackney)
 Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
 Round, James
 Russell, Gen. F. S. (Chelt'ham.)
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
 Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
 Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
 Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edward T.
 Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
 Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renfrew)
 Sidebottom, T. H. (Stalybridge)
 Sidebottom, Wm. (Derbysh.)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Skewes-Cox, Thomas
 Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)

Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Spencer, Ernest
 Stanley, Hn. Arthur (Ormskirk)
 Stanley, Edw. Jas. (Somerset)
 Stanley, Henry M. (Lambeth)
 Stanley, Lord (Lanca.)
 Stephens, Henry Charles
 Stewart, Sir Mark J. M. Taggart
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
 Strauss, Arthur
 Strutt, Hn. Charles Hedley
 Start, Hn. Humphry Napier
 Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Ox. Univ.)
 Thorburn, Walter
 Tollenmache, Henry James
 Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray
 Tritton, Charles Ernest
 Usborne, Thomas
 Valentia, Viscount
 Verney, Hn. Richard Greville
 Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
 Warde, Lt.-Col. C. E. (Kent)
 Warr, Augustus Frederick
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Webster, Sir R. E. (I. of Wight)
 Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
 Whitmore, Charles Algernon
 Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
 Williams, Jos. Powell (Birm.)
 Willox, Sir John Archibald
 Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks.)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
 Yerburch, Robert Armstrong
 Young, Commander (Berks. E.)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Sir William Walrond and
 Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Allison, Robert Andrew
 Ambrose, Robert
 Baker, Sir John
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Billson, Alfred
 Blake, Edward
 Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
 Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
 Caldwell, James
 Cameron, Sir Chas. (Glasgow)
 Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Crombie, John William
 Daly, James
 Dillon, John
 Donelan, Captain A.
 Douglas, Chas. M. (Lanark)
 Duckworth, James
 Evans, Sir Francis H. (South'ton)
 Farquharson, Dr. Robert
 Fox, Dr. Joseph Francis
 Goddard, Daniel Ford
 Gold, Charles
 Harcourt, Rt. Hn. Sir Wm.
 Harwood, George
 Horniman, Frederick John
 Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.

Jacoby, James Alfred
 Joicey, Sir James
 Jones, David Brynmor (Swansea)
 Kearley, Hudson E.
 Kinloch, Sir Jno. Geo. Smyth
 Kitson, Sir James
 Leng, Sir John
 Leuty, Thomas Richmond
 Lewis, John Herbert
 Lough, Thomas
 Macaleese, Daniel
 McKenna, Reginald
 Maddison, Fred.
 Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
 Montagu, Sir S. (Whitechapel)
 Morley, Rt. Hn. Jno. (Montrose)
 Morton, Edw. J. C. (Dev'port.)
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Norton, Capt. Cecil William
 Nussey, Thomas Willans
 O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
 O'Connor, Jas. (Wicklow, W.)
 Oldroyd, Mark
 Pease, Sir Joseph W. (Durham)
 Perks, Robert William
 Pickersgill, Edward Hare

Power, Patrick Joseph
 Price, Robert John
 Randall, David
 Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
 Robertson, Edmund (Dundee)
 Sinclair, Capt. Jno. (Forfarsh.)
 Smith, Samuel (Flint)
 Soames, Arthur Wellesley
 Souttar, Robinson
 Spicer, Albert
 Stanhope, Hn. Philip J.
 Stevenson, Francis S.
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
 Tennant, Harold John
 Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Ure, Alexander
 Wallace, Robert (Perth)
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Weir, James Galloway
 Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
 Williams, Jno. Carvell (Notts.)
 Wills, Sir William Henry
 Wilson, John (Govan)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Sir Wilfrid Lawson and
 Mr. Warner.

The names of Sir Fortescue Flannery, Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Hedderwick, Mr. Samuel Hoare, Mr. Lionel Holland, Mr. Lecky, Mr. Llewellyn, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. A. K. Loyd, Sir James Rankin, Mr. W. Redmond, and Mr. S. Woods were then added to the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—
(*Sir William Walrond.*)

FINANCE BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

MR. LABOUCHERE desired to ask a question on a point of order. The Member for Wolverhampton had placed an Amendment on the Paper which would limit the discussion to the Sinking Fund, and he wanted to know whether in the event of that Amendment being negatived a general discussion on the Finance Bill would afterwards be permitted?

*MR. SPEAKER: After the question raised by the Amendment in question is put from the Chair, any Debate which may follow would have to be relevant to the subject-matter of the Amendment; though this is not the practice where an Amendment on Second Reading is an alternative or argued negative to the whole Bill. If the Amendment is negatived and the Question is put from the Chair that the Bill be read a second time, the Debate will then be on the contents of the Finance Bill, except that part upon which the House will have already expressed its opinion—namely, the Sinking Fund. Therefore the Debate will divide itself into two parts.

MR. J. MORLEY (Montrose Burghs): Is not the effect of your ruling this—that when my right honourable Friend moves his Amendment it will then be impossible, whatever may happen to the Amendment, to have a discussion upon the whole scope and contents of the Finance Bill; in other words, after the

Amendment is moved, the possibility of raising such a large and general discussion will be extinguished?

*MR. SPEAKER: That is so; the discussion afterwards would be limited in the way I have stated. There might be a discussion of a general kind before the Amendment of the right honourable Gentleman was moved, but then it would be possible for any honourable Member to take advantage of being called upon to move an Amendment in anticipation of the right honourable Gentleman. I am following the usual course in calling upon the right honourable Gentleman, who, I understand, represents the Opposition on this occasion.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.) said that he had an Amendment on the Paper which had been put down on behalf of the Irish Members, and he wished to know whether the Amendment of the honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton could be put in such a form so as to allow his Amendment to be moved afterwards.

*MR. SPEAKER said that if one Amendment was moved and negatived no other division could take place except on the question that the Bill be read a second time. The Amendment of the right honourable Gentleman could not be put in such a way from the Chair as to allow the honourable Member's Amendment to be moved afterwards.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word “now,” and at the end of the Question to add the words “upon this day six months.”—(*Sir Henry Fowler.*)

SIR H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): I feel somewhat embarrassed by the difficulty in which the House has been placed, and I desire, as far as possible, to obviate that difficulty. I do not intend to discuss at any great length various points that present themselves for observation with reference to the Finance Bill, the Second Reading of which has been moved by the right honourable Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. An impression appears to prevail that my moving the Amendment on the Paper in my name will confine the discussion to a specific subject, and thus restrict Debate. I should

be quite willing not to move that Amendment, but to move a general Amendment that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. I would be the last man to limit a Debate of this sort, and if it be the general wish of the House I will adopt the plan I have suggested. Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to make one preliminary remark on this Finance Bill with reference specially to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right honourable Gentleman the other night stated, and the statement has been printed in the papers, and generally commented upon in the country, that the revenue for the year ending 31st March 1898 was £108,336,000. It is quite true that he also at the same time explained that to that should be added the local taxation account; but the general impression in the mind of the public is that the revenue of the year just closed was £108,336,000. As a matter of fact it was £117,000,000. That was the amount paid in taxation to the Imperial revenue during the last year. Not only is that confusing so far as the general amount is concerned, but also as far as the items are concerned. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us that the customs and excise produced together £50,000,000. As a matter of fact they produced £55,000,000. He told us that the death duties produced £11,400,000. As a matter of fact they produced £15,633,000. I am quite willing to admit that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his published weekly returns has set the matter right, but at the end of the year, when the House and the public are dealing with the revenue and the expenditure of the year, it is only fair and right that we should get rid of this transparent device, and that the real amount of revenue and expenditure should be put in figures as they really stand. The Finance Bill with which we are dealing to-day does not deal, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, with an estimated revenue of £111,000,000, but with an estimated revenue of £120,000,000. I think the time has arrived when the distinction between local taxation of this character, which is subsequently paid back in the shape of grants, should be put an end to, and the reform which Mr. Gladstone carried many years ago of not allowing any interference of revenue on its way to the

Exchequer should be reverted to. We should go back to the good, sound financial maxim and show in our accounts exactly the sum we are raising, namely, £120,000,000. Now, Sir, the Budget which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has presented has two features. It imposes additional taxation of a very different character. I am not going to discuss this question, as I know there are many honourable Members of much greater competence than myself who understand the difficulties which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has raised by his proposals. So far as the modification of the stamp duties is concerned I would express my opinion that the time has arrived for a complete revision of the stamp duties, and for a Consolidation Act. I think that the right honourable Gentleman would find that a field of much profit. It would add to the public convenience, and he would secure a large and just addition to his revenue. I am sorry for the alteration in the duty on light wines, not only because of the complications it creates in the trade, but also on account of the effect it may have so far as foreign affairs and Colonial affairs are concerned. It is a very small sum from which to raise the questions which may be raised in these two directions. And when we look at it, that the wine duties are not increasing, but for years have been a decreasing quantity—that the consumption of wine is under 16,000,000 gallons, while the consumption of spirits is 40,500,000 gallons, and of beer 1,251,000,000 gallons—I think there was another sphere in the drink duties which the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he desired to enter into the happy enclosure, might have attacked. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said the other night that he saw no reason—and the House cheered, and the honourable Member for the Central Division of Sheffield cheered—why he should not impose these duties, bearing in mind that the Colonies imposed very heavy import duties on manufactures from this country. But who pays those duties here and there? If the Colonies choose to enhance the price of manufactures by imposing duties upon them, we think that is their misfortune and their mistake. If, on the other hand, in this country we impose these duties—they are not of a protec-

tive character, for there is no one in this country who makes wine—the consumer will pay the tax. The tax will not be paid by the people of France or by the people of Australia, who export the wine, but by the British consumer. The effect will be, and that is what I deplore in connection with this matter, that you will reduce the trade with France, by diminution of the consumption of these cheap clarets—a consumption most desirable in the interests of temperance—and also diminish the trade with your Colonies. Now, the proposals with which I wish to deal with to-night are those relating to the Sinking Fund. I frankly admit that this is a very difficult subject, and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in dealing with it is entitled not only to the fullest credit with reference to his opinion on this question last year, and the policy which he then adopted, but he is also entitled to the fullest credit for the great difficulties with which this question is surrounded.

Circumstances have varied very considerably since 1883, when the last dealings with these annuities took place, and it is impossible fairly to consider this question in 1899 without recognising that there is a different state of circumstances with reference to the prices of funds, to the rate of interest, and to the position of the Savings Banks, which I will not say were not fully considered, but which it was not anticipated in 1883 would prove a difficulty of this magnitude. I venture to submit to the House, with the greatest deference, that it is impossible to fairly discuss this question without a full consideration of its details. I do not wish to look at this thing as a general question. I rather want to ask the House to go through it item by item, and to see exactly where we are, where the difficulties really arise, and what are the reasons why we object to the course which the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to take. It seems to me that in such a full consideration of this question we have to look at the Sinking Fund in three different branches—the old Sinking Fund, which is wrapped up and concealed in terminable annuities; and the new Sinking Fund. Whatever consideration we give to that question we cannot separate from it the peculiar and, I would almost say, anomalous—certainly the most difficult and complicated—posi-

tion of the National Exchequer with reference to the Savings Bank Fund. I think it is worthy of note, when speaking of the Sinking Fund, that the creditors of this State have no right to claim any repayment of their capital. Now that is a totally different position from that occupied by most foreign countries, and certainly from the great bulk of foreign loans. Our State is under no obligation to provide any Sinking Fund for any of its liabilities. In consideration for the money advanced to the State, we undertake to issue perpetual annuities, once at 3½ per cent., then at 3 per cent., now at 2½ per cent., soon going down to 2½. In 1923 we have a right to redeem those annuities at par—namely, at £100. Now the old Sinking Fund, to which Mr. Gladstone attached the greatest importance, and which was certainly his favourite instrument in dealing with the reduction of Debt, was the realised surplus of each financial year, the amount of income raised in excess of the expenditure incurred. The House will see that that is a very variable figure, and also a very variable system, that it led frequently in times past to tempt Chancellors of the Exchequer to put their estimates of revenue too low, and to put the estimates of expenditure too high, and in that way to create a surplus which was available at the end of the financial year. Nevertheless, a great deal of good has been done down to recent times by that old Sinking Fund. In three years—from 1864 to 1866—Mr. Gladstone paid off £10,500,000. Lord Sherbrook (then Mr. Lowe) paid off in five years £15,750,000, and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer—I cannot say he has paid off, but he has had in three years—from 1896 to 1899—nearly £12,000,000, including the sum which was appropriated by a special legislation at the end of the first year for extra unanticipated expenditure. The actual realised surplus, beyond all question, was, in 1895-6, £4,200,000; in 1896-7, £2,473,000; in 1897-8, £3,678,000. It was from that surplus from which he appropriated, I think wisely, £2,500,000 for the purpose of shipbuilding. Last year the realised surplus was £186,000. These figures show the House that this is a variable quantity, and I think that it is a sound principle, to which the House will not dissent, that a fixed pay-

ment of a fixed amount, not varying according to the exigencies of the year, is the safest and surest way of making provision for the National Debt. Now, the second and greatest Sinking Fund, which is to some extent touched by this Bill, is the terminable annuities. I have heard a very many financial authorities, both in and out of the House, regard that scheme as a perfect mystery. They do not understand it, and I do not believe that the public generally understand it, and perhaps in times gone by it was never intended that the public should understand what they were doing by paying these terminable annuities. There is no doubt that by means of terminable annuities we have effected enormous reductions of Debt, and I think it is only by that means that we shall be able to continue those reductions in the future. A terminable annuity is an annuity which ends at a fixed term. I will give the House one illustration showing how it works out, not with the Savings Bank Fund, and not with the funds under the control of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but with the general public. Suppose I want an annuity for 15 years, and that I have £10,000 in Consols. The National Debt Commissioners will give me for that an annuity—I quote round figures—of £800 per annum. The Consols will be transferred into the National Debt Commissioners' names, and they will be cancelled, and the Commissioners undertake the liability of paying me for the next 15 years £800 a year. The payment to me of that amount—£800 a year for 15 years—will ensure to me my income at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the Consols, and will provide a fund which, accumulated at compound interest, will replace my £10,000 at the end of the time. That is a very simple operation, but it is an operation which has a very limited extent. But in 1863 Mr. Gladstone extended this sound principle of terminable annuities, to a very large extent, by dealing through their instrumentality with the funds under the control of the National Debt Commissioners. In that year he exchanged £24,000,000 held on account of the Saving Banks for certain temporary annuities, which expired in 1885. Let me give the House one figure to show how that was done. I take one sum of £5,000,000 in any sort of description of

stock. The interest on that £5,000,000 at 3 per cent. was £150,000. Mr. Gladstone exchanged that for an annuity of £315,000 a year, expiring in 1885. The £5,000,000 Consols were cancelled at once in the books of the National Debt Commissioners and in the Bank of England, and the effect of that would appear to be an apparent reduction of £5,000,000 in the National Debt. So there was in the Funded Debt, but there was a corresponding sum put into the Debt due on terminable annuities representing the capital which had to be provided during the course of the years that that annuity would run in order to replace it. And here we will have the first difficulty with the Savings Bank Fund. That £5,000,000 Consols was not taken from the open market; it was absolutely extinguished, but it had to be replaced during the time the annuity ran. There had to be replaced from the open market, year by year, such an amount of Consols as would at the end of the time produce the £5,000,000 back again. There the difficulty is created, arising from the fact that the Savings Bank have to receive the full interest upon their sum of £150,000, and as fast as the money is repaid they have to replace a certain sum per annum in Consols, so that at the end of the period they have to replace the whole £5,000,000. The House will see, therefore, that there is no merit due to the Chancellor of the Exchequer who is Chancellor of the Exchequer at the end of these annuities compared with what is due to the Chancellor of the Exchequer who was in office at the beginning of the annuities. At the end of the period there is a much larger sum wiped out, and a less amount of interest to pay. What you have received in exchange for the £5,000,000 is an equal sum of £315,000, payable every year. How that is applied in the payment of interest and in replacing the capital is a matter for the creditor, and not for the debtor. The annuity is safeguarded—that is, the repayment of the debt—but the debt is not absolutely repaid until the last year has expired. Now this mode of conversion which Mr. Gladstone established was very popular, and he applied it in many succeeding years. But in 1881 Mr. Gladstone foresaw what would happen in 1885, and in his Budget speech of that year he re-

ferred to it, and he made proposals for dealing with the annuities which would expire in the rapidly approaching 1885. I remember his making a proposal to deal with these annuities which would expire in 1885 by longer annuities than he had created in 1881. I will not trouble the House by stating what he did on that occasion, because, owing to the state of foreign and home affairs, he had not time to develop his proposals in legislation. It was not until 1883 that Mr. Childers dealt with the annuities which we are now asked by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to deal with in this Bill. In 1883 the Debt stood at £756,000,000. The reduction of the Debt in the previous year—I am quoting these figures to show the light that it throws on our present situation, for one of the arguments we have had to deal with is the undesirability of reducing the Debt by such large sums—but, so far back as 1883, the reduction of Debt in the previous year by Mr. Childers was upwards of £7,000,000, and the average for the three years which had elapsed since Mr. Gladstone came into office was £6,839,000. The proposals which Mr. Childers made involved a reduction of Debt in the year 1883 of £8,000,000. I only mention this to emphasise the fact that in 1883 a reduction of £8,000,000 was not considered an extravagant or intolerable sum, and at that time I think the revenue was only something like £77,000,000. Now, Mr. Childers not only dealt with the annuities which were expiring, but he said he did not propose to appropriate one shilling of the money that was going to be saved at the expiration of those annuities. Every shilling was to be employed in the creation of fresh annuities. He not only took £30,000,000 from the Savings Bank, but he did a still bolder thing, which Mr. Gladstone had indicated in 1881—he took £40,000,000 from the funds under the control of the Court of Chancery. The House will remember that the State is as much responsible for the funds paid into the Court of Chancery as it is for the funds paid into the Savings Bank. Mr. Childers calculated that there was then £60,000,000 in the Court of Chancery, and he took £40,000,000 of that, and turned his Consols into an annuity of between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 a year. These were subsequently converted

in the year 1888 into the annuities which will expire in 1902. The effect of that operation of Mr. Childers was that the £70,000,000 was cancelled, and the same process is now going on, and has been going on, and the difficulty of replacing that £70,000,000 of Consols is now coming to an end in the next few years. One great portion of those annuities which we are now dealing with will expire in 1902, another portion in 1904, and I am not quite sure that there is not one portion goes into 1906. At any rate the bulk of them expire within the next few years. It may be asked, What is the advantage of paying off terminable annuities in this way? The advantage is this—that the taxpayer pays a sum, without knowing it, towards the redemption of the National Debt. The terminable annuities he knows is a national obligation, the payment of which he regards as a nauseous powder which is disguised in a quantity of jam, and he swallows it without any objection. I do not think that beyond the desirability of securing a fixed payment for a certain number of years and converting it into a permanent payment there is any advantage. There is none theoretically, but the proof of the pudding has been in the eating of it, and the large sums I have mentioned and other large sums have been extinguished in the course of the last series of years by this method, and I do not think they would have been reduced to such a large extent in any other way. The other point I was going to allude to at the commencement of my speech was the new Sinking Fund, established by Sir Stafford Northcote, and that is the Sinking Fund which the right honourable Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is proposing to attack. Now, Sir Stafford Northcote in 1875, when he brought in his scheme, after having alluded to the success of what he called the continuous and steady efforts for the reduction of the National Debt, which had been made by means of these annuities, said:—

“I do not think Parliament has any great reason to be proud of the amount we have expended in the past year for the reduction of the Debt. We are paying this year £27,200,000 of Debt. But let us remember that up to the year 1860 our ancestors, from the time of the Peace, and ourselves in early days, never paid less than £28,000,000.”

Sir Stafford Northcote proposed to the House that there should be a fixed amount of £28,000,000 devoted to the Debt charge, and that was to be appropriated first in payment of the interest on the Debt, the management of the Debt, the terminable annuities, and the balance which remained was to form the new Sinking Fund. One of the features and one of the advantages of that new Sinking Fund was that it was to be an automatically increasing sum, as year by year the debt was paid off. It was not to be a fixed sum, but as the Debt and the interest was reduced the amount was to increase. Sir Stafford Northcote then thought, and I think so too, that the state of public affairs was so prosperous then that he thought £28,000,000 was a sufficient sum to be appropriated for that purpose. I have given the House, I am afraid, too much detail, but I have brought it down to the present time. That Sinking Fund has been dealt with twice, and that £28,000,000 has been dealt with twice since Sir Stafford Northcote's time. The Chancellor of the Exchequer now proposes to deal with the three annuities about to expire. There is the Savings Bank annuities of £2,199,444, or in round numbers £2,200,000, and he proposes to deal with that sum and commute them into longer annuities running over 20 years. His first argument is—and I will take it rather more fully from his Minute than from his speech—that, in effect, his scheme will be to diminish the annual charges in the next four years by £7,000,000. The effect of the present state of things and of the expiring annuities will be a reduction of the Debt, which will add £7,000,000 to the Sinking Fund in the course of the next four years. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer will admit that that is a fair and a plain statement. But in order to arrive at that he has to make two or three large assumptions. He takes into consideration and places to his credit the reduction of the Debt in 1903. That, I think, is a question with which we shall have to deal when the time comes, and whether it would be desirable to apply that to the reduction of taxation, or whether it would be advisable to apply it to the reduction of the Debt is quite an open question. There is no legislation providing for that sum, and it would go

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into the new Sinking Fund. But the right honourable Gentleman makes another assumption, for he assumes that the annuities which are to expire in 1904 are going to be abandoned. To arrive at that £7,000,000 you have to assume that there has been the concession of utilising these for the purpose of creating fresh annuities.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir M. E. HICKS-BEACH, Bristol): In the Treasury Minute and in my Budget Statement, I referred to what would be the effect unless Parliament made an alteration in the law.

SIR H. FOWLER: My argument is this: That according to precedent the alteration should be the creation of fresh annuities for the purpose of paying off the National Debt, and not for the purpose of relieving the Sinking Fund. Then he adds to the £1,388,000, which is now the new Sinking Fund, a possible condition, which may or may not arise year by year, and he puts the state of the new Sinking Fund for the time he mentions at £8,500,000. The wording of the Treasury Minute—which to my mind is a surprising document—is a very strong argument in favour of creating fresh terminable annuities to absorb that figure, and he bears in mind that in 1885 such measures were proposed by Mr. Gladstone, and were actually taken by Mr. Childers. Now we come to the actual proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which is to convert this £2,200,000 annuities into three new annuities. In one he proposes to extend the time of the unexpired portion of these annuities—and this is perfectly legitimate—which will expire in 1903 until 1923, and he then proposes to take what is called "The Book Debt" in the Bank of England, which was created by the present First Lord of the Admiralty at the time of the conversion, and which stands to the debit of the country at the Bank of England, and he proposes to convert that into an annuity. I think that is an arrangement which is open to some discussion as to whether they could not have dealt with it in a more effective manner to relieve the pressure upon the Consol market. He then proposes to increase the annual amount to £870,000 in regard to the new annuities which he takes from the Savings Banks. Now, the

ultimate effect of what the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes is that, so to speak, in consideration of his renewing these annuities so as to absorb upwards of £2,000,000 of money he shall reduce the fixed amount of the Sinking Fund from the £25,000,000, at which it now stands, to £23,000,000. That, Sir, is the operation of his proposals, which I propose to challenge on this occasion. The first point he mentioned in his speech was that he was justified by precedent, and that was his first argument. He said he was doing only what Mr. Gladstone did when the long annuities fell in, and also what Mr. Childers did. I think we must say something about Mr. Gladstone's finance in connection with this proposal. Mr. Gladstone, in 1860, himself said that they were approaching a most important epoch in British finance, and that was the falling in of what was called the long annuities, amounting to upwards of £2,000,000. They have nothing to do with the terminable annuities or the payment of the National Debt. But amongst the various ways in which money was raised during the time of the great war, and before the great war, in addition to the ordinary annuities and Consols, about which I have been talking, the Government of the day used to give bonuses in the shape of small annuities, amounting to a large sum in the aggregate—and some of them were created long away back in the last century—and they were all made to expire in 1860. It was a distinct relief, said Mr. Gladstone, that there was such a windfall as had never come into the Treasury before. Now, what did Mr. Gladstone do with that large sum? He was face to face with a gigantic expenditure, an expenditure which had been materially increased towards the close of the previous year by an extraordinary military and naval outlay. He had a large taxation on tea and sugar, the relics of the Russian War, and he had an income tax of 9d. in the pound. But if he contented himself simply with proposing that the sum should be absorbed into the revenue, and nothing more, it would have been a financial operation which no one would have questioned. That was not Mr. Gladstone's mode of finance. He discerned in that a great opportunity of carrying on and developing the commercial legislation of the country, which had already produced such

happy results, and he faced the situation. Not only that, but he had to face the great loss of revenue arising from the French Treaty, which had been finished that year. He also proposed large remissions of taxation—and we have none in this Budget—to the amount, I think, of upwards of £4,000,000 upon consumable articles of the food of the country. He also proposed dealing with the paper duty, and would have dealt with it if the House of Lords had let him; and he also proposed a very ample scale of expenditure. That, no doubt, absorbed the £2,000,000, but he did not flinch from asking, and the House of Commons did not flinch from granting, an income tax of 10d. in the pound to carry out those arrangements. He raised the income tax 1d. in the pound when £2,000,000 were falling in, and that was the precedent of 1860, which I commend to the right honourable Gentleman. In 1881 Mr. Gladstone was again face to face with this question, and from the Budget Statement, to which I have already alluded, I should just like to quote to the House what Mr. Gladstone said. He was dealing with the annuities which would expire in 1885, and he said—

“The effect of this conversion is to liberate a considerable annual sum. I should regard it as a wholly illegitimate proceeding to apply any portion of the sum so liberated in favour of the Ways and Means of the year. I propose to use it to the last farthing in the re-conversion of stock into those longer annuities which will expire in 1906.”

I do not think that Mr. Gladstone's precedent is an encouraging one for the right honourable Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Now, in 1883 Mr. Childers not only disclaimed any intention of appropriating any part of the money to meet the demands of the revenue for the year, but he created a larger demand upon the revenue in order to provide money for the reduction of the Debt. Therefore I say that the right honourable Gentleman has no precedent in the action of past financiers to justify his present proposals. He lays stress upon the enormous burden of seven or eight millions to be applied in the next few years, and he proposes to reduce the Debt charge from £25,000,000 to £23,000,000. In the first Budget after the accession of Her Majesty in the financial year which expired on the 5th of

January, 1838, the Debt charged for that year was 29½ millions. The country could then afford to pay that large sum, and we are now told that we cannot afford to pay £25,000,000, although 29½ millions was paid in 1838, and of that amount £2,000,000 were applied to the repayment of the Debt. That sum has varied for a long series of years from £31,000,000 downwards, till in 1860 it was below 28½ millions; and with the solitary exception of 1886, when the Sinking Fund was suspended, it has never been below £25,000,000, and this will be the lowest figure that this item has ever appeared at in our national balance sheet. Is there anything in the condition of the country to justify this? I am not a believer—and I never held that view—in the doctrine that the Sinking Fund is never to be suspended. There are circumstances which will arise—circumstances of foreign complications, circumstances of commercial depression, and circumstances of oppressive taxation—which will justify, as they justified Mr. Childers when he was suddenly called upon to provide for an extra expenditure of £20,000,000, or when my right honourable Friend the Member for West Monmouth during his term of office had to deal with an unexpected deficit, although he only suspended a very small portion of the fund. I do not lay down the doctrine that the Sinking Fund is an Ark of the Covenant which ought never to be touched; but what I do object to is a permanent reduction of the amount. I want to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer is there any reason for this? I go back to the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, for he is the very best witness I can call upon that point. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he made his Budget speech last year, and two years ago when he went into office, had to explain the difference between the estimated receipts and the actual yield of the revenue, and he accounted for that to his own satisfaction, by dwelling upon what appeared to be the entirely exceptional circumstances of the year. I was wrong, and we were all wrong. Ever since that time there has been a sudden and steady advance in the activity of our trade, in the high-spending power of the masses, in the profits of the nation, and in the accumulation of wealth. He said there

was no sign that the apex of our prosperity had been reached, or that there was any indication of a downward tendency; that so far as he could make out there was no falling off in our foreign trade; that in certain great industries profits and wages had increased, and that the standard of comfort in the country had also increased. That is what he said last year; but what did he say a fortnight ago? He said there was no alteration in the condition of the people between 1898 and 1899. He said that the returns of the bank clearing houses and the railway traffic showed the activity of our trade, that there had been a distinct increase in the rate of wages, and that our own trade was good; the agriculturists had had a good season, and foreign trade had reached an enormous sum. I venture to submit to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that there is no case for his argument in the condition of the country. The revenue is the largest that has ever been known, for it is £121,000,000, and now we are to be told, in this year of unexampled prosperity, that it is too much to pay £7,000,000 towards the reduction of the Debt, when in 1883, at which time the revenue was only £77,000,000, we paid the same amount without grumbling. That is my objection to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposal. There is no foreign complication at this moment, and every fact refutes the argument in the Treasury Minute that the devotion of such a sum as £8,000,000 to the reduction of the State's liability does not transgress reasonable limits. That is the point where we are at issue. We say it does not, and that it is inside reasonable limits. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has said that this question should be decided without recourse to the Sinking Fund, for he held it to be legitimate to suspend the whole or part of the Sinking Fund to meet a temporary national emergency. That is exactly where we agree with him, and it is only when he applies his argument, that we differ at the conclusions at which he arrives. The Chancellor of the Exchequer himself laid stress upon an argument of a more practical character, arising out of the position of the Sinking Fund in connection with the Post Office Savings Bank. I pointed out to the House how the Savings Bank funds are dealt with, and not only have

the Savings Bank funds increased—augmented by the appropriation of large sums of Consols to replace the £20,000,000 or £30,000,000 which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken from them, but there is a growing increase in the deposits of the Savings Bank, and the average in the last four years is upwards of £10,000,000, all of which, unfortunately, has to be invested in Consols. Now, this Savings Bank fund creates an increasing demand in the market where the supply is constantly decreasing. I did not catch the Chancellor of the Exchequer's figures, but I think he said that the Savings Bank holds £173,000,000 of Consols. Now, why should not these funds be invested? I know the answer will be that you must give the national guarantee. These people have deposited their money, and they can have nothing short of the national guarantee. But why is the national guarantee sounder or more obligatory when it is invested in Consols? I should like to put to the House a concrete illustration to clear up what I think is this Jekyll-and-Hyde confusion and complication in this doctrine, and in the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as borrower and lender, head of the Exchequer, head of the National Debt Commissioners, and as head of the Savings Bank Department. Suppose I am a depositor in the Savings Bank for £100. It is called the Post Office Savings Bank, but that has no meaning—it means a deposit with the Chancellor of the Exchequer ultimately. I lend that £100 and deposit it with him, and upon that sum he agrees to pay me £2 10s. interest, and to repay me my capital whenever I want it. The Savings Bank is a national bank, under the control of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he being liable, as representing the State, for every shilling that is invested there. Now, what does the Chancellor of the Exchequer do. He takes my £100, and invests it in Consols, for which he is going to pay me £2 10s., and he is going to get £3. When Consols were below par it was a profitable operation. But now he is investing in Consols at 110, and for that he only receives £2 10s. a year, which is what he has to pay me. Say he invests the money for what it will fetch. He can only get £90 of Consols for his £100, and the time is coming when they must be paid off at

par. It is an operation which is bound to result in a great national loss if it is allowed to go on. The real debtor in all these transactions is the State. The Chancellor of the Exchequer does not make £100 into £110 by transferring it from his name in one capacity to his name in another capacity. The time has arrived when some more complete, safe, and practical mode should be constructed for dealing with this new aspect of the funds of the Savings Bank. This very heavy premium, which I do not believe to be justified by the state of the market, practically arises from the Government buying against themselves. May I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there may not be a larger development of the Public Works Loans Commissioners' operations? May I not ask him whether there is not upwards of twenty millions of stock at $2\frac{1}{2}$ and $2\frac{1}{2}$ now in the hands of the public which is redeemable at par in 1905, and which might be converted and redeemed? The Chancellor of the Exchequer being himself the debtor on the faith of the United Kingdom, the individual Savings Bank man has nothing to do with what is called the investment. He looks to the State—why should he not, instead of buying Consols at this premium of £10, lend the Secretary of State for India the money on the security, not only of the revenues of India, but upon the enormous reproductive works, so that he would get an interest which would not involve him in this heavy loss? I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will not appoint a Select Committee of this House—totally irrespective from all Party considerations, and dealing with this question as a national question—to look at the whole question of these Savings Bank funds, and to see whether we cannot protect the Consol market and the terminable annuities, and relieve him of many difficulties by a thorough reconsideration of the whole of the State's liability in respect of these investments. Several honourable Members have contended that it was an advantage to have a National Debt. A nation is but the aggregate of individuals. Does the honourable Member who cheers consider it an advantage for himself to be in debt? Does he think that his position is stronger and better because he has overdrawn his banking

account? Does any landed proprietor think the burden of a mortgage to be an advantage? There is no advantage to anyone in being in debt. It is a tax on the industry of the country, because it is industry which pays the interest of the Debt. I am sure that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will repudiate the idea that it is his business to find investments for people. His duty is to get rid, as far as he can, of debt. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself gave one reason, which is, I think, stronger to-day than it was 12 months ago. After alluding to our efforts to pay off debt, he pointed out that the increased debt of local authorities far exceeded the amount by which the National Debt had been reduced, and he said—

"I do not wish to enter into comparisons between the reproductive character of the National Debt and that of the local debt, but both are heavy burdens, and ultimately they are borne by very much the same shoulders. In view of this continual increase of the local debt, there is surely an additional reason, if any were required, for perseverance as far as we reasonably persevere in the payment of the National Debt."

The right honourable Gentleman's virtue has succumbed to the temptation of the present time. There have been two reductions of this Sinking Fund, and both were effected by the present First Lord of the Admiralty. He effected his first reduction in 1887, when he reduced the 28 millions to 26 millions, in order to take a penny in the pound off the income tax. The situation then was so happily described by the right honourable Gentleman's predecessor in office that I must quote to the House some of Lord Randolph Churchill's words—

"We are told that economy is very unpopular, that the people of this country like to know that they have a strong Army and a large Navy. All I say is, place the cost of these things on the taxation of the country. Has the Chancellor of the Exchequer placed it upon the taxes? No; what he has done is this, he has manufactured a surplus by reducing the repayment of the capital of the National Debt. I, for one, do not believe that his proposals will do much good. I do not believe in his Budget."

The sentence which follows is the most singular, for Lord Randolph Churchill had sat in Conservative Cabinets, he had been a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he had prepared a

very striking Budget of reductions for that year—

"It is a Budget that has been made for him partly by general political circumstances and partly by the persuasions—I will not call them the prejudices—of the colleagues with whom he has to deal."

I think history has repeated itself.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): It was absolutely untrue

SIR H. FOWLER: The right honourable Gentleman is the living authority, and I will bow to him. But what did Mr. Gladstone say of this procedure in 1887?—

"We are now going to reduce the total annual provision for the reduction of the National Debt to appoint lower than the lowest point at which it has stood in the recollection of any of those that hear me. . . . Is that a proposal worthy of support? . . . Is it congenial to Conservative tradition? Who are the Conservative financiers whose proposals are favoured and cherished in connection with Conservative recollections? Is this a proposal that Mr. Pitt would have approved? Is this a proposal that Sir Robert Peel would have approved? . . . I myself am convinced that serious, reflective, and sober-minded men, on this determination to stint the means applicable to the payment of the Debt with the view of not only what is called relieving posterity, but with the view of making provision for a rainy day, and enlarging your means and resources for great expenditure when the necessity for great expenditure arises—I cannot think that serious and deliberate reflection will warrant a proceeding so inadequately corresponding to the courageous tradition of Englishmen, to the far-sighted tradition of English statesmen, or to the general interests of the British nation."

Those who had the honour of being associated with Mr. Gladstone in financial affairs will attach the weight to those opinions which they deserve. We are asked to tamper with these funds at a time of unexampled prosperity. Our Debt mainly represents a great war expenditure; there is very little of a truly reproductive character. Our only war-chest is this provision for the repayment of the National Debt. It is our true national resource; it is the most powerful instrument which the Government has if war breaks out. It is powerful not only by enhancing our financial reputation, but by enabling us at once to raise 200 millions without adding to the taxation of the country. In no other country in the world can they perform a financial operation like that. If

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a war should arise it will not be done cheaply. The expenditure now on modern armaments is something far outstripping anything that history records, and we shall not only have to raise a very large sum of money, but no doubt that expenditure would have a tendency to increase. I think that nothing has occurred that justifies this tampering with this Fund, and I ask the House to adhere to this moderate provision for the reduction of our liabilities and the strengthening of our resources. I ask them to do it as a measure of supreme importance, as a matter of national defence, and our national defence means the preservation of peace. Under these circumstances I hope the House will in some shape or other record its disapproval of the proposal as being not only a weakening, but tending also to destroy our strongest and most impregnable bulwark of defence financially. I move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

MR. HALDANE (Haddingtonshire), who seconded the Amendment, thought that his right honourable Friend (Sir H. Fowler) had clearly shown that the matter was to be dealt with on general grounds alone, and it would be unreasonable to debate it upon any other. The reduction of the Sinking Fund could only be justified by special circumstances in a time of enormous difficulty, which he did not see existed at present. With the price of Consols standing at 111, either the terms of the conversion of the National Debt in 1889 had been too favourable, or the operations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been of an unsatisfactory character, and he thought the burden lay upon the right honourable Gentleman to prove to the House that there was no way out of the difficulty in which he was placed than by suspending the Sinking Fund. Looking at the matter, and taking it in a concrete form, what did they find? The Savings Bank deposits showed a surplus of something like £12,000,000, and everybody supposed that the Savings Bank was a concern which conducted its business on profitable lines, but on a closer examination it bore a different aspect. It was a Government concern, and took this money, upon which it agreed to pay 2½ per cent. to the depositors, and with it it bought Consols, but when those Consols were bought at

£111 it did not look very profitable, seeing that on each purchase of £100. the Government were losing £10. He thought it was extremely bad business to pay Savings Bank depositors 2½ per cent., and then buy with those funds Consols at 111, paying 2½ per cent. interest. The practice of investing, whether by means of the Sinking Fund or in any other way, in Consols at a premium to meet the liabilities of the Savings Banks was a practice that was involving the country in a great loss, and was a great deception of the public. At somebody else's expense they were paying a large sum of money to the depositors in these Savings Banks, and they were not getting their money back from anybody. The bearing of that upon the question which they were considering to-day was that they must find some other mode of dealing with the Savings Bank investments. What he wished to lay stress upon was this, that in 1923 it would be possible to redeem these Consols at par, and the difficulty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not exist then, or would not exist in the same form, and therefore it seemed most expedient that they should be making provision against that great day when they would be able to pay off their liabilities to the creditors of the nation at par. The question was how they were to invest in the meantime. The Government invested a large amount in loans to local authorities, but on such terms of repayment in regard to permanent improvements that many of these bodies found they could do better by going into the open market. There was abundant business of this kind to be done by the Government if they could only make their terms a little more workable. He was repeating what he had been told by business men outside when he said that if the Government were a little more elastic in the terms on which they went into the market, they could at any rate do better than they did at present. It was not only in the matter of local loans and of those Indian securities to which his right honourable Friend the Member for Wolverhampton had referred, but it was the same in regard to Colonial securities. He was quite aware of the difficulties of Colonial securities, but it was nonsense for the Government to shut trustees out from doing as part

of the general law what they did privately and freely in this respect. He should support the Amendment because he felt that an opportunity had now occurred in which to revise the whole field of finance, to adapt the machinery to the conditions of modern times, and to manage the finance of the country in a fashion which would be more tolerable judged by the ordinary standards of bankers and financial authorities in the great departments of trade.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The little comedy which preceded the speech of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton is the curious result of the divergence of opinion with regard to the financial proposals of Her Majesty's Government on the Opposition side of the House which is displayed by the Amendment Paper. The right honourable Member for Wolverhampton does not object to make provision for the finance of the year, and it is perfectly clear from his speech that he does not materially object to my proposals for new taxation. What he objects to is the permanent reduction of the fixed Debt charge, and, therefore, objecting to that, his view would doubtless be that further new taxation should be proposed in addition to that which I have suggested. The honourable Member for Northampton takes an entirely different view to the right honourable Member for Wolverhampton. The honourable Member for Northampton, not having approved of our expenditure, has put down an Amendment on the Paper to leave out the first paragraph of the right honourable Gentleman's Amendment, and I know from his previous statements on the subject and his undoubted consistency of opinion that the honourable Member for Northampton believes that the reduction in the provision for the repayment of Debt is sound finance. Then we come to the right honourable Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean. He does not agree either with the right honourable Member for Wolverhampton or the honourable Member for Northampton. He only objects to providing so much of the expenditure as is included in what he describes as adventures in Africa or in those provisions for securing the greater strength and efficiency of the Army which he endeavoured to defeat last year, but in

which he did not succeed in obtaining the support of the House of Commons. Finally, the right honourable Baronet and the honourable Member for Bolton object both to what they mistakenly call, I think, the diminution of effort to pay off Debt, when all I propose is really that we should devote more annually to the payment of Debt in proportion to the amount of Debt than was done before. But they regret also the imposition of any fresh taxation which is injurious to trade. I do not want, after the speech of the right honourable Member for Wolverhampton, to go at any great length into the questions of fresh taxation which I propose. I think a better opportunity of dealing, for example, with the wine duties will undoubtedly occur in Committee. But this much I will say—that if it be assumed, as I think the right honourable Gentleman does assume, that fresh taxation is necessary; if it be also true, as I believe it is felt practically unanimously to be, that a certain proportion of that taxation should be indirect, I look upon it as absolutely impossible to suggest any additional taxation which would less interfere with trade and industry than the additional taxation on wine. I refer, of course, to the trade and industry of this country. Wine is not an article which is produced in this country, or, at any rate, it does not employ any large number of people like spirits or beer or other subjects of taxation in the production either of the raw material or of the article itself. The trade connected with wine here is purely a distributing trade, and therefore I maintain that in selecting wine for additional taxation I have selected an object which is an article of luxury, and, though I do not deny that in anything imposing any new indirect taxation there must be a certain interference with trade, I believe I have less interfered with trade than by any other new indirect taxation which could be imposed. The right honourable Member for Wolverhampton said with regard to the increased duties on wine that they might raise a difficult question with foreign countries and with the Colonies. But then he argued that practically any increase in our duties on wine did not affect either foreign countries or the Colonies, because any increase of those duties would be paid by the consumers here.

SIR H. FOWLER: I said that such increase would have the effect of diminishing the trade.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I have gone very carefully into the trade and as to the probable effect of increased duties in diminishing the consumption of wine. There may be a certain diminution of consumption—I admit that—but it will be very small indeed according to the opinion of the expert authorities whom it is my duty to consult in such matters, when compared with the total amount of wine which is introduced into this country. Almost the whole of the speech of the right honourable Member for Wolverhampton was devoted to what is the object of his attack in this Budget—the reduction of the fixed Debt charge. It would have been the natural result of his opinion if he had moved the Amendment which stood in his name. Why did he not move that Amendment, and stick to his guns, I cannot for the life of me imagine. He placed that Amendment on the Paper as the representative of the Front Bench opposite, who I imagine lead the Party opposite. It was an Amendment which I suppose might have attracted the confidence and support of those who sit behind the right honourable Gentleman. It appears not to have done so, for he himself ran away from his own Amendment and moved that this Bill should be read a second time this day six months.

SIR H. FOWLER: In case there should be any misapprehension upon that point I wish to say that I in no way ran away from moving the Amendment. Nothing would have induced me not to move it except that it was pointed out from the Chair that if I did so it would limit the area of the Debate. It was in order not to limit the area of the Debate that I did not move my Amendment, and for no other reason whatever.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am surprised that an old Parliamentary hand like the right honourable Gentleman did not think of that sooner. But, of course, if his Amendment succeeds, the Budget will be defeated and the Government will resign office. He would then possibly take my place. I wonder, having regard to the

divergence of opinion, on these matters, that have been expressed—and which I cannot help still thinking has been somewhat at the bottom of his withdrawal of his Amendment—what he supposes would be likely to be the success of a Budget which he might himself propose. In the Amendment which the right honourable Gentleman placed on the Paper he asked the House to affirm that it is of opinion that it is inexpedient permanently to reduce the annual charge for the National Debt. That is a very sweeping statement. He asks the House to affirm it without the slightest qualification of time, or of amount, or of circumstances. He does not say that in a time of prosperity you must not reduce the permanent Debt charge, but he says that you must not at any time make any reduction, but that at whatever amount the National Debt may stand the permanent annual fixed Debt charge of £25,000,000 is still to continue. If the National Debt is reduced to £100,000,000, to £50,000,000, or even to £30,000,000, still the taxpayers of the country must go on paying £25,000,000 until the whole Debt is extinguished, quite irrespective of whether it is possible—long before this happens—to purchase the Debt in the market at all. Again, the Amendment is irrespective of circumstances. The country may have been for years engaged in a great war. It may have suspended during that time, as it naturally would, the Sinking Fund for the National Debt. It may have incurred an increased Debt; it may have emerged from a great war, half ruined and bleeding at every pore, and yet, directly peace is restored, according to the Resolution which the right honourable Gentleman intended to ask the House to pass, £25,000,000 a year would again have to be paid or provided by the taxpayers for the permanent Debt charge. I do not know whether the right honourable Gentleman intends it, but that is what his Amendment says, and I am bound to say, if he intends anything like it, to my mind it would be financial purism gone absolutely mad; and if he lives, as I hope he may, for the next 10 years, and if, during the latter part of that time he should happen to occupy, as I very much hope he may, the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer, I absolutely defy him to put such a view

of the fixed Debt charge into practice when the time comes for the great reform to which he referred in his speech. There was one thing upon which I wished to congratulate the House in the speech of the right honourable Gentleman and the speech of the honourable Member for Haddington. We have had quiet and fair argument on the proposition I ventured to make. We had not that quiet and fair argument the other night; we have not always had it in the country. I have had plenty of abuse. I think the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth, when he fell foul of the Treasury Minute the other night, which was not my Minute at all, but a mere figment of his own imagination, must have been thinking of some of those ecclesiastical controversies in which he has recently been engaged, and of the language which they have generally provoked. But to-night we have discovered that abuse is not argument, and that misrepresentation of your opponent's proposal does not strengthen your own case. Both the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton and the honourable Gentleman the Member for Haddington have gone a long way in admitting the strength of the reason which I put forward in support of my proposal. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton frankly admitted that there were in the matter of the Sinking Fund at present great difficulties which had arisen since 1885. He stated that the premium arising from the fact that the Government on behalf of the Sinking Fund and the National Debt Commissioners on behalf of the Savings Banks were competing against each other in the purchase of Consols was a serious matter. That was also frankly admitted by the honourable Member for Haddington. But that very argument was derided the other night by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire. His contention was that my defence of the reduction of the fixed Debt charge was absolutely fatal to the whole of the Sinking Fund, and he added that my argument was that the more we took off the Sinking Fund the more secure it would become until there was nothing left of it, and then it would be absolutely secure. It would be impossible to give a more

absurd and unfair version of my proposition; which was, that if you largely increase—as you must under the proposal of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton—the sum annually given to the reduction of Debt while at the same time the market for Consols is seriously narrowing, the premium at which you have to purchase Consols must go on increasing. The right honourable Gentleman charged us with placing the real defence of our proposal upon the price of Consols at this moment, and said that if that argument were carried to its logical conclusion it would stop the payment of the Debt altogether. It is a very old saying that logic is a good servant, but a bad mistress. I should never have supposed, from his past financial and political career, that the right honourable Gentleman was such a slave to logic as he has shown himself in this matter. The right honourable Gentleman actually mistakes the premiss of the argument. I have never put forward that Consols standing at a premium of 110 or 111 was sufficient in itself to justify the reduction of the fixed Debt charge. What I did do was to point out that in the purchase of a certain amount of Consols for the reduction of the Debt we are paying nearly £2,000,000 more than we would have to pay for the reduction of the same amount of Consols in 1903. I said that that was a loss to the country. And so it is. Will any honourable Member deny that? Can they pretend for a moment that it was not desirable to avoid that loss if it could be properly avoided? My argument was not that, on account of this loss, great as it is, the reduction of the Debt should be stopped now; but it was that we should not do what I believe would certainly tend to increase largely that loss in the future by adding largely to the amount of interest set aside annually for the reduction of the Debt when the market for Consols was every year considerably narrowing. That has been my argument throughout, and I will add this to it now. It is not only a matter of the premium at which Consols may be bought; but I say, speaking after a conference with high authorities—not that it is not my opinion alone, for that would be worth nothing—that were we to go on as the right

honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton desires us to go on, without making any reduction in the fixed Debt charge, we are in measurable distance of the time when it will be practically impossible to purchase the Consols we require at all. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton frankly admits that there are both sense and truth in that argument. But his reply is that our difficulties will vanish if we put an end to the competition in the purchase of Consols between the Savings Bank and the Government.

SIR H. FOWLER: I said it would remove your difficulties to a great extent.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Precisely. And that is to be done by enlarging the powers of investment of Savings Bank deposits in securities to other securities, such as Colonial securities? But I want to know how far honourable Members opposite are prepared to go in that particular direction. I have heard of foreign countries who receive deposits in their savings banks and spend them and hold nothing whatever against them. They might as well give an I. O. U. to those who deposit their money with them. How far are we advised to go in the purchase of securities, that are certainly of less value than those which are guaranteed by the Government of this country, to be held against deposits in our Savings Bank? I noticed the action of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Monmouthshire while the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton was referring to that matter, and I never saw a more vigorous disclaimer of what I believe he regards as an even greater financial heresy than mine, than was announced in the demeanour of the right honourable Gentleman at that moment. When the right honourable Gentleman addresses the House in this Debate I trust he will not fail to denounce the financial heresies on his own Bench in the same vigorous language as he used towards myself. Let me put this to the House. You cannot deprive the National Debt Commissioners of the Consols they hold on behalf of the Savings Bank to any large extent. If they are to keep up,

in the first place, the nest egg, which all are agreed they must hold—namely, Consols as against deposits—they must hold a considerable amount of Consols for that purpose. Then, the right honourable Gentleman attaches, as he said, very high value to the redemption of the Debt through the process of terminable annuities. That is carried out through the great blocks of Consols that are held by the National Debt Commissioners being cancelled and terminable annuities set up in their places. Now, I ask, how can you continue the system of terminable annuities if the National Debt Commissioners do not hold Consols on behalf of the Savings Bank? The right honourable Gentleman may say, let them hold the large amount of Consols they hold at present and it will be quite sufficient to work the terminable annuities. So it would, no doubt. But we are bound to remember that it is impossible to exaggerate the difficulty of investing these large sums in any new security except by means of Consols. It is a comparatively easy thing to invest £10,000 or £20,000, or even £100,000 in a new high-class security. But when you come to investing many millions a year, as we have to invest on behalf of the Savings Bank, if we allow the National Debt Commissioners to go into the market and invest seven or eight millions a year in, for instance, Indian Government securities—which, I think, are not much more than 120 millions—how long would it be before you would run up the price of these securities to the full value of Consols, and how long would it be before you ceased to be able to obtain any of them in the market at all? Further, it should be remembered that if you allow the investment of the money of Savings Bank depositors in any security beyond those we can guarantee, it does seem to give a kind of limited or *quasi* guarantee to the securities chosen—a course that might be fraught with great difficulty and danger to the country. I do not deny that the position of the Savings Bank and its funds is one of very great difficulty. I have admitted that more than once. We pay a high rate of interest, and we invest at a high premium. It may be necessary to enlarge the area of investment; but I must say that I look upon the proposal with a good deal of doubt and hesitation. I

think the whole question is one of such difficulty at the present moment that it deserves a thorough and exhaustive inquiry. That inquiry should include not merely the area of investment, but also the rate of interest and the limit of deposits in the Savings Bank. It is not for the good of the working classes that the Savings Bank should be a charitable institution. We have paid during the last year or two—and the House has voted it cheerfully—a small sum to make up the deficiency in the income of the Savings Bank rather than raise this difficult and complicated question, and rather than take the only other alternative of reducing the rate of interest by $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., which would deprive depositors of a very considerable annual amount—an amount far greater than the sum the House has voted by way of relief. But as soon as the stress of the discussion we are now engaged in is over it is my intention to place myself in communication, so far as I can, with honourable Members on both sides of the House who take an interest in this question—for of all questions it is one that should be divorced from Party politics—with a view of ascertaining in what way and by whom such an inquiry as I have suggested may be best and properly carried out. But whatever might be the result of such an inquiry, I should be still at variance with what the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton has said to-night. Whatever you may be able to do with the Savings Bank money in the future, I still differ absolutely from his view of the fixed debt charge. He thinks it should be immutable. I do not. That is the difference between us. I have looked back to the Debate which occurred when the fixed debt charge was instituted in 1875, and I find that Mr. Gladstone stated as his strong opinion that attempts to fix an annual sum for the repayment of the Debt, which should never be departed from, had been tried before, and had always failed; and in answer to that statement, what did Sir Stafford Northcote say? Why, Sir, he admitted in the frankest language that, although he proposed this with the idea of making the provision for the repayment of the Debt more certain than it had been before, yet he quite felt that in circumstances of many different characters it might be necessary for Parlia-

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ment to alter the law in this matter, and that it would be altered. Well now, Sir, there is one point to which the honourable and learned Gentleman the Member for Haddingtonshire alluded on which I should wish to say a word. Circumstances have changed, undoubtedly, since those which existed in former years by the fact that Consols are now irredeemable until 1923. When my right honourable Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty converted Consols and lowered the interest on the Debt it was necessary to give a considerable fixed term to the holders to induce them to convert. Conversion would have been impossible without it. But what has been the result so far as the taxpayers are concerned? When Consols were redeemable at short notice, if they rose above par and remained above par for a considerable time, of course it was open to the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the day to do what was done by my right honourable Friend and convert them into stock bearing a lower rate of interest. That was to the great advantage of the taxpayer in two ways—because he not only secured a lower rate of interest to be paid, but it would bring the level down to par again, so that in the repayment of the Debt Consols could never stand at a high premium. I do not know whether I have made myself quite clear. But this has been altered now, largely owing to the fact that Consols are irredeemable until 1923. You have them risen to this premium and you cannot reduce them. My belief is that that premium will probably largely increase in future years before it begins to decrease. Well, Sir, that being so, what is the result of the right honourable Gentleman's view? He would compel the taxpayer of the present day to pay a high premium for the reduction of Consols, and at the same time he would deny him any benefit from the reduction of the rate of interest on the Debt which, so to speak, has been bought by bringing Consols up to the premium at which they now have to be redeemed. Sir, I contend that that proposition is utterly unreasonable as regards the taxpayer of the present day. I contend that it is another reason why he should be entitled, as I have argued before, to any benefit that may accrue to the country from the reduction of the rate of interest on the Debt. And remember this. Some

persons have argued as if the provision which we make for the reduction of the Debt was properly included in the expenditure of the country. Sir, it is nothing of the kind. The provision that we make for the reduction of the Debt is surplus revenue, set aside, and properly set aside, for that purpose. But it is surplus revenue all the same, raised by taxation, and what is asked by the right honourable Gentleman opposite is this—that we should keep on year by year practically adding to that surplus revenue devoted to the reduction of the Debt even when, as in the present year, for that purpose it is necessary to impose fresh taxation. Sir, that contention appears to me to be utterly unreasonable, and therefore more likely to bring about an agitation against the Sinking Fund than anything that I can conceive or anything that I have proposed. For what is it that I have proposed? Why, Sir, it is just this—that, in the first place, we should practically bespeak the terminable annuities that fall in in 1902. Why? Because, Sir, the taxpayer, to my mind, is entitled, not only to the benefit that may arise from the reduction in the rate of interest on the Debt, but also he is entitled, at any rate, to some benefit from the reduction of the amount of interest that is annually paid owing to the reduction of the amount of the Debt itself. He has received no benefit from that second source since my right honourable Friend reduced the fixed debt charge by £2,000,000 in 1887. Sir, since that time the amount by which the annual interest paid on the Debt has been reduced, by the reduction of the amount of the Debt itself, has been no less than £2,100,000 a year, and therefore I say that I am fairly entitled to ask, on behalf of the taxpayers of the present day, that they shall not be charged that additional taxation, having, as I have said, reduced the rate of interest on the Debt by that amount, and that this £2,000,000 should be applied to their benefit in that way. But while I do that I maintain a sum approaching £6,000,000 this year, and annually increasing in future years, to be devoted to the reduction of the Debt in future—more, I will venture to say, than would have been considered sufficient in the past, and far more than in several past years would have been considered sufficient to devote to the re-

duction of the Debt. And, further, I am sure that having, so to speak, bespoken the terminable annuities which will fall in in 1902 they should not fall in at that time and then be devoted to the reduction of taxation, or anything of that kind, by extending them until 1911 and setting other terminable annuities in their place until 1923. Well, Sir, these are my proposals, and I contend that it is an absurd and ridiculous exaggeration to say, as it has been said, that they are fatal to the credit of the country or to the reduction of the National Debt. What was said when my right honourable Friend the present First Lord of the Admiralty made a similar proposal on similar grounds in 1887? Then he was told that his proposals were fatal to the credit of the country, and fatal also to the reduction of the Debt. But what has happened? Have these prophecies been fulfilled? No, Sir, not at all. The credit of the country since that time has stood higher than it ever stood before, and the provision made for the reduction of the Debt since that time has been greater than in any similar number of years in the past century. Sir, there is one thing to which the right honourable Gentleman appears particularly to object. He says, "You are doing this in a time of unexampled prosperity." Well, I gather the right honourable Gentleman does not object to a temporary suspension of the Sinking Fund, and when I suggested the other night that, instead of this proposal, if I had merely consulted my own convenience, I might have proposed to the House, on sufficient grounds, the temporary suspension of the new Sinking Fund for a couple of years, I heard the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire say I might have done it for one year. Well, Sir, if it is so wicked, so immoral, so dishonest, and all the rest of it to permanently reduce the fixed Debt charge in a time of unexampled prosperity, why is it moral, and honest, and courageous to simply suspend temporarily the Sinking Fund in a similar time? Why are we so wicked for proposing permanently to reduce the fixed Debt charge in a time of prosperity? Why should we have escaped condemnation if we had merely proposed the temporary suspension of the Sinking Fund? Sir, to my mind the alternative course would have been infinitely more dangerous to the future reduction of the

Debt than our proposal. I have placed before the House on more than one occasion the reasons which to my mind amply justify us in dealing with the fixed Debt charge, quite apart from the financial exigencies of the year. The strength of these reasons, although he does not agree with my conclusions, has been admitted by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton. But for the temporary suspension of the Sinking Fund there could only have been this reason, that it would have been proposed in order to avoid the imposition of taxation in a year of unexampled prosperity. Do that once and you may do it in any number of successive years on the same grounds. There would be no security whatever for the new Sinking Fund if it were suspended on such a ground as that. Therefore, Sir, I do not understand the condemnation which right honourable Gentlemen opposite have placed upon the one proposal while they are ready to condone the other. But, Sir, the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, towards the close of his speech, quoted some observations I made last year and this year with regard to the prosperity of the country. His quotation was perfectly accurate. I have admitted that the country is prosperous. If the right honourable Gentleman likes it I will adopt his own words and say we are living in a time of unexampled prosperity. But we are also living in a time of unexampled expenditure. How is that expenditure defrayed? The other night, addressing the House, I referred to the date, 1875, at which Sir Stafford Northcote established the fixed Debt charge. I quoted the figures for which he then had to provide for the Army, the Navy, and the Civil Service. I compared those figures with the amount which I have to provide for in the present year. The total showed that I have to provide, in this year, under those three heads, for an expenditure of over £31,000,000 more than Sir Stafford Northcote had to provide for in 1875. And how has this great increase in expenditure since that time been defrayed? Sir, this is an important matter which, in view of the suggestions made by right honourable Gentlemen opposite, I think honourable Gentlemen on this side of the House may do well to consider. Here are the figures. Taking the same ob-

jects of duty in Customs and Excise in 1875 and in the present year the yield of indirect taxation for Customs and Excise in the first year was £47,766,000, and this year it is estimated to be £56,977,000, an increase of indirect taxation of £9,211,000. But, Sir, if you turn to direct taxation, what do you find? You find that in 1875 direct taxation produced £17,576,000, but this year it is estimated to produce £43,986,000, £26,410,000 more than it produced in 1875. Then the income tax stood at 2d. in the pound and produced £4,000,000, now it stands at 8d. in the pound and produces £18,300,000. The death duties—well, Sir, I really will refrain from alluding to the death duties because I always notice that the pleasure which the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire naturally experiences when he looks back on his handiwork of 1894 is quite eclipsed by his evident disgust at the fact that the proceeds of that Act are being expended by his political adversaries. But take the whole case, and this is absolutely clear, that the great increase in the expenditure of the country since that time when the fixed Debt charge was instituted by Sir Stafford Northcote has been mainly defrayed from direct taxation. Well, now, this evening the right honourable Gentleman referred to the action taken by Mr. Gladstone in 1860, when he appropriated the long annuities to a considerable amount instead of continuing to devote that annual sum towards the reduction of the National Debt—when he appropriated those annuities in aid of the reduction of the burdens of the country under the head of indirect taxation. Well, Sir, at that time the burdens of the country under the head of indirect taxation were considerable, far greater than they are now, and I dare say Mr. Gladstone was perfectly justified in appropriating this annual sum which fell in then and devoting it to that purpose. Sir, No one will contend that the present indirect taxation is as heavy now as it was at that time. But there is a heavy burden on the taxpayer, and it is the burden which has to be borne not so much by the indirect as by the direct taxpayer at the present time. Why are we, if Mr. Gladstone is to be praised for his conduct in 1860 in this matter, to be blamed because we decline to pro-

pose the increase of the burden of the direct taxpayer in order to raise the sum annually devoted to the reduction of the Debt to an amount far greater than has hitherto been considered necessary? Sir, I can only say this, that I look back with some suspicion to an argument which was addressed to the House last Session by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire in the Debate upon the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland. The right honourable Gentleman then prognosticated the finance of the future, and his idea of the finance of the future was this, that all indirect taxation except the taxation of alcohol should be abolished, and that the void should be made good, partly, I suppose, by reduced expenditure, but mainly at the expense of the direct taxpayer. That, of course, is the view, practically, I suppose, of the entire Party opposite; they would be opposed to any increase of indirect taxation; they desire to reduce indirect taxation. If they are contending now against the reduction of the fixed Debt charge, the idea at the bottom of their minds in this contention, I take it, is this, that the income tax should be increased this year in order to retain the fixed Debt charge at £25,000,000, and that it should be so continued until that happy time arrives, between 1902 and 1904, when they possibly may be sitting on this Bench and may propose a really democratic Budget. Well, Sir, if my proposals made this year incidentally make it a little more difficult for right honourable and honourable Gentlemen opposite to carry out such an idea as that, I do not think on that account that they may less commend themselves to my honourable Friends on this side of the House. But, Sir, the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton charged me finally with having violated what is described as the war chest of the country. Well, Sir, I attach great value to the Sinking Fund as the war chest of the country, but a war chest must not be always kept too tightly locked, even in time of peace. Let me remind the House of what happened in the years 1884 and 1885. In the year 1884 an amount of £6,800,000 had been devoted to the reduction of the National Debt, the greatest amount from the fixed Debt charge

that had yet been devoted to that purpose. A very few weeks after the close of that financial year the Prime Minister of the day had to come down to the House, at the time of the Russian war scare, and propose a Vote of Credit for £11,000,000, which was hurriedly voted and wastefully expended, and with this result on the Sinking Fund—that it had altogether to be suspended for the whole of that year. And why? Because the country was not in that state of preparation for war in which it ought to have been; and because the money that should have been devoted, and more properly devoted, to that preparation, had been used in paying off the National Debt. The real resource of this country, after all, whatever may be the value of the Sinking Fund at a time of crisis, is in the pockets of the taxpayer. We have set up an engine for obtaining the funds we may need in any such crisis to an extent which our forefathers never could have dreamed of, having regard to the present wealth of the country, and that is the engine of direct taxation. I say that it would be wrong to impose such a burden on the direct taxpayer—a limited class, a comparatively small class, when compared with the whole of the country—as would prevent that engine, important as it is, from working with real and thorough efficiency at a great time of need. I say that you have no right to do what you really propose—namely, to impose additional direct taxation in order to keep up the fixed Debt charge to a greater amount proportionately to the amount of Debt than it has ever been at before, to keep that up and increase it automatically quite irrespective of the possibility of buying Consols, or of the price at which they are to be purchased. I say any policy of the kind ought, in my belief, to be rejected by this House as an impossible, pedantic, and unfair interpretation of the meaning and intention of the fixed Debt charge.

Mr. HARWOOD (Bolton) said the Chancellor of the Exchequer had spoken of windfalls as though they were unexpected meteors revolving in the financial heavens. The fact was, however, that they were prophesied at the time. Sir Stafford Northcote foresaw that there would be someone prowling about after these so-called windfalls, and

prophesied exactly what had happened. To come to the House, therefore, and talk of this as some surprise was beyond the conception of anyone who understood reasonable book-keeping. There were only two reasons which would justify a reduction in the Sinking Fund—war and bad times. According to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's own confession, neither of these prevailed now. He said it was quite true that we were in a state of great prosperity, but it was also true that our expenditure was greater than ever before, and that therefore we were perfectly justified in paying off a smaller proportion of Debt.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I argued that we were justified in paying off a greater proportion of the Debt, and so we are.

MR. HARWOOD understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that although we were more prosperous we were more expensive than in 1875. He would remind the House of the objection he had made to the way the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought forward his Budget Statement, so as to include the Post Office and the Telegraphs in the national expenditure. That was not national expenditure at all, and in the figures he would give he would exclude the Post Office and Telegraphs. In 1875 when Sir Stafford Northcote was Chancellor of the Exchequer the total expenditure was £75,025,000, that on the Post Office and Telegraphs, £4,194,000, leaving a net expenditure of £71,000,000. In 1899 the current total expenditure, according to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Statement, was £111,000,000. That on Posts and Telegraphs was £12,191,000, leaving a net expenditure of £98,390,000. Another thing had to be considered, and that was, that in 1879 the population of the country was 33,000,000, while in the present year it was 40,000,000. If the population had been 40,000,000 in 1875 the expenditure would have been £86,000,000—that was taking man for man and person for person, and at the same ratio £98,000,000 in 1899. It was well known that the income tax was the best gauge of the power of the people to bear taxation. A penny in the pound income tax yielded in 1875 £1,900,000; this year it yielded £2,250,000. If we were to take the test

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according to population and power to bear taxation this particular year we ought to be able to stand an expenditure of £100,000,000, whereas in reality our expenditure was only £98,000,000, and instead of taking £2,000,000 from the Sinking Fund we should have been no worse off than in 1875 if we had added £1,500,000 to it. We were in reality paying in proportion to numbers and ability £1,250,000 less than our forefathers in 1875. If in 1859 the average payment towards the redemption of the National Debt had been £1 per head of the population, now, if we paid off £25,000,000 per annum, the average would have been only 12s. 6d. per head. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that we were accumulating capital, spending money now which we ought to have spent in previous years. We were accumulating what capital, and what assets? Some said that we had a better Fleet. We were all proud of that, but what of the future? The future might have its own difficulties. It might be possible that aluminium may become practical for constructing warships, and our successors would have to spend money. It was not safe for us to presume that posterity would not have their own duties as onerous as ours. We had no assets for this enormous expenditure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might say we had the Suez Canal shares, but our greatest assets were our coal fields, and these were being exhausted. According to the statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer there would be in 1905 £9,250,000 of terminable annuities at his disposal, and when we saw this large sum looming in the future it was a good reason why we should consider the whole matter carefully, and make up our minds to a broad general policy in dealing with the National Debt. What should that policy be? He was sure that the country felt that we should get rid of the Debt in a reasonable time. Some people said that it was an advantage to have a National Debt. A Debt might be an advantage for others to trade in, but he never heard that it was an advantage to those who owed the money. He should be slow to acknowledge that the financial ability of the country was unequal to the task of providing that accumulated surpluses should be employed in

the extinction of Debt. Six hundred millions was the amount of the debt for the French War. Would anyone say that that was an asset, or that it was unreasonable to pay off the cost of that war? He held that every thoughtful patriot would be delighted to see an end of the Debt. A scheme to pay off the whole Debt would excite the popular imagination. We derived great strength from our Navy, and as much from our Army, but our greatest strength, even from a physical point of view, was in the smallness of our Debt, and it would become greater still if there were no Debt at all. His next point was the particular way in which the taxes were raised. It was quite obvious that we might be told that it was ridiculous with one breath to say, "Add to your taxation," and with the next to condemn the imposition of taxation. He did not object to fresh taxation, but to fresh taxation injurious to trade. He held that the proposed new taxation was the most expensive and most foolish method by which to raise money, because it discouraged trade. It discouraged trade in two ways. In the first place it disturbed trade, and there was nothing worse for any trade than disturbance and uncertainty. Now, the wine trade was peculiarly sensitive to disturbance of that kind, because it was necessary that large stocks should be kept. In the second place it discouraged trade in general. One was amazed to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer proclaim doctrines which were sometimes apparently accepted in the House, which would be laughed at in any gathering of moderately intelligent schoolboys. The most expensive way of raising money is by putting on a tax of any kind which prevents us trading with other countries. We heard of keys and "open-doors," and "closed-doors," but the worst possible use to which you could put a key was to lock your own door. The notion that seemed to possess the mind of the honourable Member for Sheffield was to send your commodities to everybody else, but not to let them send anything to us. But if we sent goods to another country we must, directly or indirectly, take back from it some other commodity. He did not care for the heresies about exempting some countries from taxation and not others, and he hoped they would not take that backward step. They ought to welcome any country in sending us

commodities, being quite sure that in the long run we should have to send it something in return. Another reason why he objected to the new taxation was that it would discourage temperance. They were all agreed that the people ought to be encouraged to drink refreshing light alcoholic liquors rather than the heavier, but now we were asked to take a retrograde step. In 1860 the import of wine into this country was only 600,000 gallons, but now it was over 6,000,000 gallons. Now, all knew that duties discourage trade, but the proposed duties would differentiate in favour of the choicer wines as against the cheaper. For instance, they would involve an increase of 8 per cent. on the lighter wines and only 1 per cent. on the choicer wines—thus punishing a class of people whom we ought to take care of—all the more because they made themselves so little heard in the strife of politics—the class of poor professional people and the struggling middle classes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said the duties would not make any difference in the consumption of the light wines. But they knew that in the time of John Knox claret was the common drink of Scotland. He would venture to say that, in all their excellent qualities, the Scots would have been better still now if they had retained their national drink of claret, and that it was not to the advantage of Scotland that they had turned, by the force of excise and customs laws from claret to whisky. As to our own nation, he believed that the wit and buoyancy of its great days would not have been possible had they soaked themselves in beer. The lightness and the buoyancy and the wit were due to the light French wines which the people drank. He would not speak of free trade as if it were a goddess before whom we ought to bow down and worship, but he begged the House not to go back upon it. He held that free trade had made the nation great and prosperous. He begged the House to hesitate before agreeing to the new duties, because they were retrograde from the point of view of temperance, and unjust in the point of view of trade.

Upon the return of the *SPEAKER*, after the usual interval,

**MR. COHEN* (Islington, E.) said that his right honourable Friend, in the

powerful speech he had just delivered to the House, began by twitting the Member for Wolverhampton that he had not moved the Amendment now before the House in the form in which he had put it on the Paper. He had been a Conservative long before the new Sinking Fund was established, but that did not make him any the less regret and deplore that for the second time it should be a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer who was reducing the amount set aside for the redemption of the Debt, and that it should be the Party opposite, of which he had never had the honour of being a member, which stood up for and was seeking to maintain that solid and sure basis on which the finances of this country had been established, and to which, in his opinion, its prosperity and power were pre-eminently due. The House had listened with a great deal of interest to the very lucid way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer explained his proposals when he introduced the Budget. One passage in particular gave him intense pleasure. After explaining the sums which had been applied to paying off the Debt, the right honourable Gentleman said that he did not want to alter the practice which had prevailed, which was the only safeguard which this country had from something like financial ruin, and he said, "Long may this practice prevail." It did prevail for about three-quarters of an hour, for before the right honourable Gentleman sat down the practice had been put an end to by the hand of his right honourable Friend himself. He hoped the House would bear with him while he examined the reasons by which his right honourable Friend had defended his proposals. He dismissed at once the suggestion that the proposals had anything to do with the fact of there being a deficit in this year's Budget, and he did so for two very excellent reasons. The Chancellor of the Exchequer himself assured them that it was only a coincidence. In the absence of that assurance it might have been natural to have connected the deficit with the reduction of the Sinking Fund. He was quite sure that the House would accept the assurance that for two years his mind had been applied to this subject, for the right honourable Gentleman had told them that he was strongly opposed to the prac-

tice of reducing the Sinking Fund in order to remit taxation. There appeared to him to be a very thin line separating the reduction of the Sinking Fund in order to relieve taxation and refraining from imposing taxation when the source to which they had to come to supply the necessities of both was the same identical source of the new Sinking Fund. For those two reasons we must take it the reduction of the Sinking Fund had nothing to do with the case. He wished to examine those reasons. If it was an unpardonable financial sin to reduce the Sinking Fund in order to remit taxation, it was difficult to see how it could be easily justified if it was only to avoid imposing taxation. The right honourable Gentleman had given as one reason the high price of Consols, and the imprudence of buying them at 110 when they would be redeemable at par in 1923. There seemed to him to be some little confusion in the minds of honourable Members with regard to the expression "redeemable in 1923." It was quite true that they could not be redeemed till then, but who was going to say that they would be redeemed in 1923? He had been in business himself for over 30 years, and his experience induced him to say that he would be a very bold man who would express an opinion in 1899 as to what would be the state of the world in 1923, and what would be the state of the National Debt in that year; and of all the problems the most insoluble was what would be the price of Consols in that year. He had known of fluctuations in the market for 30 years, and he should be very loth to express an opinion as to any particular year, much less for 25 years. He would now pass to what his right honourable Friend laid stress upon. Let it be admitted that it was unwise and not economical to go on buying Consols at premiums which might be possibly higher and higher. What was the answer? His right honourable Friend explained the point the other night, for he said that £75,000,000 would be too much for the Savings Bank to lock up in terminable annuities. Speaking for himself, he would rather do that than reduce the Sinking Fund. Supposing his right honourable Friend had created terminable annuities to obtain £1,000,000 of the £2,000,000 which he had reduced the Sinking Fund

by, half his difficulties would have been solved by one stroke of the pen, and the other £1,000,000 could have been found by another easy process. He thought it could be shown that there were inequalities and irregularities which might arise in connection with the new stamp duties. He did not complain of the stamp duties suggested on foreign and colonial bonds, although he did not think it would work in the manner contemplated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. They did not believe that bonds to the bearer should pass almost free from taxation as they did now, and it was unjust that they should. He should be the very last person to try and arrest by such duties the formation of good, sound, and solid companies. If companies were sound, and their prospects were good, they could very well pay a great deal more than they were now paying; but if they were unsound, then the more that could be rescued from their capital for the benefit of the Exchequer, the better it would be for the community at large. The stamp duty question could not be undertaken this year, and so he would pass on to the suggestion of his honourable Friend the Member for Haddington, that the way to reduce the competition which forced up the price of Consols would be to extend the field of investment, and in particular Savings Bank deposits. He had himself in past years advocated that the State should guarantee the Indian Debt. He could not argue that point now, but until that had been done and the law was altered the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not put Savings Bank deposits in Indian stock. It was interesting to observe that it was only two years ago that his right honourable Friend the Member for Wolverhampton was pressing, with the approval of the country, upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the noble Lord the Secretary for India the necessity of the British Exchequer coming to the aid of India, which was then very depressed, and now two years after, notwithstanding famine and war and devastation which had occurred in India, it was India which had the surplus and England the deficit. His right honourable Friend had referred to the competition in the market for Consols, and that competition was at the bottom of the whole thing. He was very glad in-

deed to hear his right honourable Friend apply himself to that question with such a sympathetic attitude, which he was sure was welcomed by the whole House. He believed that the House of Commons would be glad to see a powerful committee constituted capable of examining into this question to see how far it would be safe and proper for the Savings Bank money to be invested in stocks which had not got the guarantee of the Consolidated Fund. Every depositor was entitled to have the State guarantee, although he did not say that it would be a wrong step to put the same money into securities which had not got the guarantee of the Consolidated Fund. It would, however, be a very serious step, and one which should not be sanctioned without a very careful inquiry. Then there was the proposal of the Member for North Islington, which struck him as being very ingenious and perhaps a practical suggestion. He should not, however, be prepared to adopt it without some amendment. This question was becoming more urgent every day, and ought to be inquired into. He did not think the local debts of the county councils and other local bodies should be resorted to, because they needed no encouragement to borrow, and it was quite possible that if the terms were reduced it would act as a stimulus to those bodies to create debt, and it would be in the interests of the House rather to safeguard that disposition. Those were questions which showed that the inquiry should be a serious one. He apologised to the House for the length at which he had intruded upon their attention. He had tried to examine the reasons which his right honourable Friend urged in support of his proposals, and he would only say in two or three words what were the reasons which occurred to him which operated against them. The Chancellor of the Exchequer dealt very eloquently in introducing his Budget upon the large amount which he had to provide for the Army and Navy. He did not regret that expenditure. On the contrary, he desired that it should continue. His right honourable Friend had said that they all hoped for a great deal from the coming Peace Conference, but, speaking for himself, he hoped it would dispel some of the illusions regarding armaments. Those large arma-

ments in his opinion were the most powerful protection against a European war, which might be precipitated if any great Power were to lessen its armaments and thus expose itself to the attack of other better equipped nations. If such expenditure was to go on, as he thought it should do, it seemed to him that such expenditure suggested and required at the same time provision being made for the continuance of the reduction of the Debt. No one contended that under no circumstances should the Sinking Fund be suspended, but the very reason which induced every reasonable and thinking man to acknowledge that, under certain circumstances of commercial trouble, the suspension of the Sinking Fund was necessary and even legitimate—those very considerations strengthened the necessity for reducing the Debt in times of prosperity. He believed in the endurance and in the permanence of the commercial supremacy of this great capital, but they could not shut their eyes to what was going on every day. Their labour troubles were more frequent and more serious than they used to be. Foreign competition was far more keen and far more insidious than it used to be in former years. There might be times when they might not have an income of £112,000,000, and when they would not be able to do what they were doing now. If they would not buy Consols at a premium to pay off the Debt, were they going to wait until they were at a discount? If such a time arrived it would be because they had some great commercial trouble or possibly a political crisis, and that would be just the time when they should suspend the operation of their Sinking Fund. In his opinion the welfare and prosperity of this country would continue with its responsibilities, and foremost amongst those responsibilities, in his judgment, was the continuance of the system of the automatic increase in the provision made for the reduction of the Debt, which was the sole fabric on which their sound system of finance and their great material prosperity and political power had for a long time been maintained.

MR. LABOUCHERE said the words of the honourable Member who had just sat down showed that on the Liberal side of the House they were essentially

purists in finance. They did not ask whether a thing was popular, but whether it was right or not. His right honourable Friend, and a great many others on this side of the House, held that it was undesirable to reduce the amount of the Sinking Fund. He did not believe anyone would say that if the country was given the chance of choosing between being taxed to the extent of £2,000,000 extra, or of that amount being taken from the Sinking Fund, they would decide in favour of the former. Human nature was so constituted that it preferred to pay off debts as soon as possible. Supposing any of them in that House were to buy a coat, and the tailor said, "You must either pay me £5 down or you must give me an I O U from your great grandchild." There was no one who would hesitate about giving an I O U on his great grandchild, although it would be more reasonable for him to pay for it himself. He was astonished at the argument used in favour of reducing the Sinking Fund which was put forward by the right honourable Gentleman. He said they owed it to their great armaments that they were not at war at present with some foreign Power. His argument amounted to this—that they were not at war, and if they had been they would have incurred a large debt. That was a very astonishing argument. The right honourable Gentleman had said that on the Opposition side of the House they thought his proposals were wicked and immoral. He confessed that he did not go so far as to think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was politically wicked and immoral on account of his proposal in regard to the Sinking Fund, but there were other grounds upon which he thought both the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his colleagues were politically wicked and immoral. The Chancellor of the Exchequer appeared to think that the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire always regretted that the spending of the result of the death duties was in the hands of the present Government. The right honourable Gentleman had cause to be proud of the death duties, and he (Mr. Labouchere) could perfectly well understand the regret and sorrow of the right honourable Gentleman that they should be spent upon such foolish pro-

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jects as the Uganda Railway and other absurdities. He opposed the fresh taxation suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as he thought that if more money was required it ought to be provided by those who could best afford to pay. The rich ought to pay for the poor. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had pointed out that he had to provide for an expenditure which exceeded that for which Sir Stafford Northcote was responsible when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer by £31,000,000, and had asked whether it was his fault. It undoubtedly was, because he should have stopped and have refused to agree to such an expenditure, but he has allowed it to go up. He had not the control of his colleagues. He should always weigh the policy and the expenditure entailed by that policy which his colleagues proposed, and refuse the money if he does not think, or he imagined that others will not think, that the expenditure is legitimate. The right honourable Gentleman should always bear in mind that he was the people's representative, and must always look after the interests of the community at large, and not after any particular fad of the Government of the moment. The Government, according to the right honourable Gentleman, had increased their expenditure by £17,000,000. He was informed that the figure was £19,000,000.

***THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER:** I do not know whether the honourable Member would care to know what I really did say, but, if he would, I might tell him that what I did say was that the estimated expenditure, including the contribution to the Local Taxation Fund, for the present year had increased by about £19,500,000.

MR. LABOUCHERE said the House should bear in mind that, while it had been pointed out that the expenditure had increased by leaps and bounds between the date when Sir Stafford Northcote was Chancellor of the Exchequer and the present time, more than half of the expenditure was due to the enormous increase of our armaments. A very large amount had been expended on the Navy, owing to the declaration which had been made that we intended to maintain the supremacy of the sea. That meant the

supremacy of the world, and nobody could be surprised that, when such a declaration was made by the country, that other nations should increase their navies. It was not a fact that this country had been enforced to increase its Navy owing to the action of Foreign Powers. It was quite the reverse; other navies had been increased because of our declaration. What did the supremacy of the ocean mean? It meant that all foreign countries held their Colonies and their commerce at our mercy, and that if they did not agree with us we could bombard their ports. It was impossible for him to suppose that other nations would allow it. When Napoleon threatened to have supremacy over Europe he for a time succeeded, but, having united all Governments against him, he very effectually lost that supremacy. This country had gone no further. We had not only declared our intentions to maintain the supremacy of the sea, but we had stated that we intended to enter into some species of alliance with the United States of America, and that that country and ourselves had a mission to seize upon and civilise any part of the world which we desired to possess, and which did not happen to belong to any civilised nation at that particular moment. What happened with regard to Fashoda, a town in the interior of Africa, which certainly did not belong to this country; and whether it belonged to Egypt or not was a matter of opinion. When our troops got there they found the French in possession. Whether the French were there rightly or wrongly it was not necessary to discuss, but at all events the representatives of the Government of this country refused to enter into any discussion before they withdrew, and threatened them with an ultimatum that if they did not withdraw without discussion we should compel them to do so by force of arms. They withdrew because they were sensible people, and knew our Navy was stronger than theirs. But honourable Gentlemen must not forget that that would be a great object lesson to other countries who might combine and lay down a declaration that we should not be masters of the sea. We should probably unite all the nations of the world against us to contest that supremacy. Did not the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the First Lord of the

Admiralty see how absurd their contention was that this country's fleet must be equal or superior to that of any two Foreign Powers. Let them suppose that we were engaged in a war with France and Russia, and that we only had a Navy equal to those two Powers, if Japan joined the Alliance against us we should be at her mercy. In his opinion the whole contention was one of the most foolish that possibly could be put forward. The result of it was that there was a war expenditure in the time of peace which was constantly increasing. It was supposed that our safety in this respect lay in the fact that we were so much richer than other nations, but he would remind the House that we were not richer than the whole of them if they found it necessary to combine against us. He recollected perfectly well that when this House was first asked to vote for a large Navy the argument put forward was that the Army was so small. Now that we had a large Navy, the House was informed that it was necessary to have a large Army, and the expenditure was consequently growing. The House was told that expansion was the law of our existence, and therefore we have expanded. The right honourable Gentleman the Colonial Secretary had informed the House that where our frontiers ran with the frontiers of other Powers it was necessary to have garrisons of equal strength with theirs, so that we had put ourselves into competition with the great Continental nations with their huge armies. With regard to the African markets, he would only say that they were absolutely worthless. In his opinion the proper course would be to look after the old markets that we possessed and endeavour to improve them. The time and money that had been devoted to making markets in Africa was a waste of energy. A nation only had a certain amount of commercial energy, and that was wasted if it was exerted in a wrong direction. At the present moment we had an Army of 10,000 men in South Africa, and the reason for their presence there was that President Kruger had lately been spending money in increasing the defences of his own country. No one dreamt for a moment that he was going to invade Cape Colony, and, with the experience of the Raid, there could only be one opinion as to his wisdom in securing the

defences of his country. Yet 10,000 men were sent to Africa at a cost of over £1,000,000 a year. He believed the country would not agree to this immense expenditure in times of peace. Already the Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted that he was reduced at the present time to all sorts of expedients to meet the expenditure. Nobody would object to his reducing the Sinking Fund had the money been required for the purposes of education or Old-Age Pensions, or in any way where it could be employed to greater advantage than in the Sinking Fund. There was no objection to the money being spent; the objection was to the way in which it was spent. With regard to the wine duties, no doubt it would be proved by experts, and proved conclusively, that that increase in the duties ought not to be made. He himself thought it was a great mistake to increase the wine duties as against France and Italy, and it was a still greater mistake to increase them against our Colonial wine growers. The House was constantly being told that the Colonies ought to be drawn closer to the Mother Country, but in his opinion it was hardly the way to carry out such an excellent sentiment to tax their wines. It was disgraceful when they were told by the Vice-President of the Council how miserable and bad the schools were and how desirable it would be to spend more money on them that such amounts had been spent on armaments. Out of all the money the Government had spent during the time they had been in office they had been unable to spare a penny for the purposes of improving education. In conclusion, Mr. Labouchere said he should oppose any indirect taxation whatever, but he would welcome direct taxation if the money was spent in a proper manner—such as in Old-Age Pensions, education, and any other matter which should be governed by the State for the benefit of, and which would affect, the entire community. He admitted that the Liberal Party was not free from blame in regard to the great expenditure on armaments. They had dallied with the unclean thing, and had actually voted the money for it, but they had grown wiser, and now declared that they objected to it. He hoped the right honourable Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer would withdraw his Budget and bring in a

Mr. Labouchere.

fresh one, where the incidence of taxation was placed upon a sounder financial basis than at present. He should vote against the Budget.

*MR. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) did not think that the majority of Members on the Government side of the House and the great body of feeling in the country would agree with the honourable Gentleman who had just spoken. Either the conditions of the country warranted a suspension of the Sinking Fund or they did not, and he thought they did. The speech of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton went to prove that during past years, when prosperity was not so great, there had been enormous reductions in the Debt, and that our prosperity now was not likely to diminish. That surely was an argument in favour of the suspension of the operations of the Sinking Fund. If the Debt was burdensome, and the interest was hard to pay, and if there was a period of unexampled prosperity which it was thought was not likely to continue, then everything that was possible ought to be done to reduce the Debt; but, as had been pointed out, the prosperity of this country was not likely to decline, and, therefore, under the circumstances, he did not see why the Government should not avail themselves of the advantage now before them and reduce the Sinking Fund instead of wasting the money in taking up Consols at so high a premium. He quite agreed with the honourable and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General, who had said it was easy enough to suggest in the House that there were other investments quite as safe as Consols in which the Government might invest, but it was a very difficult thing to find those investments. When one came to consider that £15,000,000 was the amount to be invested in Consols, in 10 years that meant £150,000,000, and it was very easy to say that it could be put in something else, but it was very difficult to find suitable securities. The honourable and learned Member opposite had alluded to the advantage of lending money to local authorities, but he forgot that the Savings Banks were in a peculiar position, because the funds had to be easily realisable. If they lent the money to municipalities they could not realise it

when they wanted, and in the event of a run on the Savings Bank it would be very dangerous to have their money invested in such securities. It was a very large question, which required a great deal of consideration, but on one point he agreed with the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton and that was that if the Savings Bank money could be invested in Indian securities it would be an advantage, because India was part of the Empire. That question, however, hardly arose at present, and would require a very great deal of time to deal with it. The right honourable Gentleman wound up his speech by saying that the Sinking Fund was the war chest of the nation, and that statement had been repeated in a great many newspapers. That merely meant that a certain amount of money could be raised without any additional taxation. He did not suppose that any honourable Member would say that the mere act of the suspension of £2,000,000 of the Sinking Fund would prevent the country raising any amount of money should a crisis arise. He might point out that the price of Consols had not been moved at all by the suspension of the Sinking Fund which had been proposed, and the credit of the country had in no way been impaired. He would give them an example. Suppose in five years, by some misfortune, they had a war with another European Power, and they had to raise £60,000,000 or £70,000,000 of money. They could raise it with equal facility whether the Sinking Fund was partially suspended or not; what they would have to do would be to put on fresh taxation to meet the interest on that 60 or 70 millions. The question before them was whether they should put £2,000,000 on their taxation to-day in order to provide for a contingency which might arise in five or six years' time. Was it not better to wait till the emergency arose? He did not suppose the country was prepared to pay extra taxation to deal with an eventuality which had not yet occurred. Now, how had this money been spent? It had been spent in making preparations to avoid war. Last November when they went through a very critical period of their history the expenditure of putting their Fleet in order was something like £70,000. But some years ago, when they had a dispute with a

European Power their expenditure to put the national armaments in good order was £11,000,000. Was it not better to suspend a small portion of the Sinking Fund and have no increase of taxation, than to continue the Sinking Fund and then ask for a large amount of taxation? The right honourable Gentleman opposite seemed to think it was an absolute evil to be in debt, but he might point out that many large firms considered it an advantage to be in debt, and he would give them a simple illustration. Take a manufacturing firm which had spent a large amount of money, say £100,000, upon a freehold warehouse. Suppose they borrowed £75,000 on mortgage and gradually reduced it to £50,000, which they borrowed at 3½ per cent. They would not pay off that £50,000 because they could employ their money more profitably in the business. Now, with all due deference to the great ability of the right honourable Gentleman, he thought the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a sound one. He had met a good many financial authorities recently, and he had discussed this matter with them, and with hardly a single exception they agreed with him that a partial suspension of the Sinking Fund at the present moment, when the National Debt was reduced and when the national credit was good, was an advantageous circumstance, and a good piece of finance on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said the right honourable Gentleman had stated that the only alternative to his proposals was an additional penny on the income tax. He had never heard a Budget speech in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not say—what is your alternative proposal? That was not their business, although he might say that there was the obvious alternative of the re-imposition of the tobacco duty. Nobody wanted that relief, and it benefited nobody but the middlemen. If he had carried out that policy there would have been no necessity for going to the Sinking Fund, because the amount of the deficit would have been very small. He said the other day that he was bound to provide for the expenditure, but that was no justification for suspending the Sinking Fund. When there was a great emergency the suspension of the Sinking

Fund was justifiable, for that was the purpose for which it was instituted. If circumstances arose under which they could no longer purchase Consols in the market, it would be necessary to deal with the Sinking Fund, but he did not anticipate a day on which such a necessity could possibly arise. He should have thought that the experience that they had had in reference to this matter would have been sufficient to induce the Chancellor of the Exchequer to have refrained from again using the old argument used by the First Lord of the Admiralty in 1887, that if he then dealt with the Sinking Fund and reduced it, it would prevent any future Chancellor of the Exchequer dealing with it in the same way. When the First Lord of the Admiralty made a somewhat similar proposal in 1887 he said that £6,000,000 was a formidable sum to have at his disposal, and he placed it on a safer footing in the future by reducing the annual amount to £26,000,000. The right honourable Gentleman seemed to have totally misconceived the whole aim and object of the Sinking Fund itself, and he said he had taken £2,000,000 from it because it had accumulated since 1887, when the last raid was made upon the Sinking Fund. That was simply cutting against the whole principle of the Sinking Fund. The other day the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the new Sinking Fund was never intended to be anything but a small unappropriated balance of the fixed Debt charge. He could hardly have read the speech of Sir Stafford Northcote when he introduced the new Sinking Fund, or the return which was issued, showing what was in the minds of those who introduced it. Sir Stafford Northcote calculated that the amount of reduction of the Debt in 1899 would be no less than £10,900,000, and that by the year 1904 the reduction would be about £13,000,000 a year, proving that Sir Stafford Northcote never intended that £28,000,000 should be the permanent charge. The right honourable Gentleman had said that the circumstances had altered since, but they had altered for the better, and the country was more able at present than it was in 1874 to contribute to the reduction of the Debt. He did think that the House ought to consider the position in which the country stood with regard to its great indebtedness. It had been men-

Mr. Banbury.

tioned the other day that not only was the National Debt £640,000,000, but that they had also £300,000,000 of local indebtedness as well. That was called reproductive expenditure, but it was still a debt of the country. This year the net reduction of that £640,000,000 was only £3,500,000, and under those circumstances it was not too much to ask that the Sinking Fund should not have been further touched, but should have been allowed to carry out its object. He thought they ought to look at the general total of taxation in deciding whether the country was in a position to bear a smaller or a larger charge, and anyone who took the trouble to go into the figures would see that they were now consuming a larger amount per head than they were in 1875, and that the income tax and all other sources of revenue were much more reproductive now than they were at that period. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that they ought not to buy Consols at the price which they were at the present moment. It was obvious that if Consols were cheaper they would make a better bargain, and it seemed to be forgotten that if they ceased to buy they would still continue to pay interest on them. Consequently, they would be a better bargain now than at a later stage. A good deal had been said about reducing the price of Consols by finding other investments, and the Member for Haddington mentioned the Savings Bank, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had practically admitted that there was some force in what had been said to justify an inquiry into the matter. His right honourable Friend the Member for Wolverhampton had pointed out that there were the Two-and-a-half Per Cents, which it would be all the better to extinguish, because they were not stock which was easily dealt with, and they might involve some £20,000,000 of investments. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in regard to the creation of further terminable annuities, said he was going to cancel £15,000,000 of Savings Bank stock, and it was said that he might cancel sufficient to make up the £2,000,000 which he had taken from the Sinking Fund. He had also stated that in order to do that it would be necessary to cancel £60,000,000 of stock, and that that would reduce the amount in the hands of the National Debt Commissioners to too small a point. Taking that £15,000,000

for 23 years it would involve a charge of £870,000 a year; and, therefore, to utilise the £2,000,000 would have involved not £60,000,000 of stock, but only £35,000,000. In view of the amount which was at present in the hands of the Savings Bank, he would ask the right honourable Gentleman if he could not see his way to cancel another £15,000,000 in order to spread this charge to the furthest extent possible. Mr. Childers, in 1885, cancelled no less than £70,000,000 of stock, which left him only something like £40,000,000 of Consols, whereas if the right honourable Gentleman did what he had suggested he would still have about £80,000,000 of stock. He thought this was a matter which they might very well bring to the right honourable Gentleman's attention, because if it only involved about £35,000,000 the difficulty might be overcome by creating terminable annuities. The Chancellor of the Exchequer dwelt very largely on the great expenditure of the country as one of the reasons why he proposed to reduce the repayments on the Debt. That was the very last argument which the right honourable Gentleman ought to use as an explanation for meddling with the Sinking Fund. A great many of them believed that a great amount of the national expenditure, especially for the Navy, had been absolutely necessary for the safety of the country, but they believed there was no sufficient check on that expenditure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Treasury had been giving money out with both hands, and nothing tended more to extravagance than the thought that each Department could get as much money as it liked. The only real check in the past, as in the present, was the knowledge that if there were a deficit it must be met by taxation. That knowledge strengthened the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and made for economy. On the ground of economy, and because it was especially advantageous to the country that it ought not to cease to repay the Debt, and ought not to break that principle for the sake of about £200,000 a year, he should certainly vote for the Amendment.

Mr. HUBBARD (Lambeth, Brixton) said that the indictment raised against the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed

to be drawn on abstract lines. The right honourable Baronet the Member for Wolverhampton endeavoured to prove that in making any proposal for the reduction of the Sinking Fund my right honourable Friend was proving himself a financial heretic. In the matter of financial orthodoxy and heresy, he thought the Committee was very much in the state of the early Church during the Ayrrian controversy, when parties were so evenly balanced that orthodoxy and heresy were banded from side to side. He wished the House to consider the matter from the plain business point of view. He thought they all agreed that a Sinking Fund once set up was worthy of respect, but there was a fallacy in endeavouring to erect into an immutable law a principle that was of general application. In finance, as in morals, circumstances should be allowed to alter cases. The right honourable Gentleman, in moving his Amendment, asked what were the circumstances that could justify the reduction of the Sinking Fund in a time of prosperity. The Government, to be successful, must be run on sound business lines. In all great industrious concerns it was the practice to "write off" a fixed percentage, and that continued in normal years, but not in abnormal years. In a year in which stock had to be renewed, or where there was a large expenditure for plant, or for other purposes, the amount written off would be found to be less, the justification being that the value of the assets had been increased. That appeared to him to be exactly what the Government had done. They had added very largely to the extent and power of the Navy, and in doing that they had endowed the country with the most valuable asset it could have. It seemed to him, therefore, that the Government was justified in diminishing somewhat the amount "written off," and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had proceeded in a perfectly businesslike manner. There was no doubt that the real justification of the Sinking Fund was the fact that in time of war the six or seven millions now paid would represent a capital sum of 200 or 300 millions raised without any cost to the country. That was an advantage which no other country possessed, and surely it was only reasonable that in a year when they had undertaken so much that the Fund

created for the purpose of meeting a war charge should be in part appropriated for the expense of the present year, incurred for the very purposes for which the Fund was created, namely, to provide against the risks of war. The Budget was a popular Budget. Every Budget should be popular, but it was especially necessary at present that they should not put any heavy charge on the people that could be avoided in order that they should not create a reaction against the increase of the Army. Such reaction would be a great disaster, and the Government had very wisely followed the line of least resistance. The right honourable Baronet said that he considered the proper way to reduce the Debt was by fixed payments of fixed amounts. It seemed to him that that was not such a sound proposition as that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who said that the reduction of the Debt should bear a certain proportion to the amount outstanding. That appeared to him to be the more logical method. He would suggest to the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it would not be possible to arrange annuities rather on the principle of payment by instalments of a fixed sum of capital with interest that diminished every year. He would accomplish the same object with greater symmetry and with greater fairness to succeeding years. The question of how to find when Consols stood at a prohibitive premium an investment for the Savings Bank Fund was indeed a matter of extreme difficulty, and he was very glad to hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he was willing to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the subject. Look at the amount they were paying. In 1894 £37,000,000 of Consols were bought at an average discount of $2\frac{1}{2}$, which was very good business; since 1894 no less than £75,000,000 had been bought at an average premium of $7\frac{1}{2}$, which actually meant a loss to the country, when the time of maturity arrived, of no less than $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions. That could not be said to be a satisfactory financial transaction. The question now arose, were they going to continue to run the Savings Bank at a loss, or should they reduce the rate of interest? He confessed, if it were possible to avoid it, that he would very much regret to see the rate of interest reduced at a time when they were doing

all they could to foster habits of thrift. But they could not, as business people, continue to run the Savings Bank at a loss. They might meet the difficulty by widening the area of investment, and it seemed to him that India stocks formed a very suitable field of investment for the Savings Bank Fund. It would not cause any very heavy burden on the country, because they practically guaranteed them already. Another subject to which he would venture to call attention was that of local loans. The Local Loans Fund was not a very suitable stock for investment by municipalities and local bodies. It was a 3 per cent. stock, which stood at a high premium, and was redeemable as soon as 1912. Local debts of the country had been increasing at even a greater length than the National Debt was being paid off, the increase during the last five years being something like 45 millions. Would it not be possible for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to obtain leave to make another issue, say a 2½ per cent. Local Loan Stock, and to invite the municipal corporations, urban sanitary authorities, and district councils to borrow from it? Would it not be possible to place the Government in somewhat the same position as regards its system of finance as that occupied by the London County Council? He would not refer to the wine and stamp duties, except to remark that the business in foreign securities ran on high and very delicate lines. He thought right honourable and honourable Gentlemen who objected to the reduction of the Sinking Fund were bound to indicate an alternative. The right honourable Baronet had held up to them for admiration the example of Mr Gladstone, who in time of peace refused to reduce the charge on the Debt, but put a penny on the income tax. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer did that, he would meet with even greater opposition than was shown to his present proposals. It was practically impossible for any Chancellor of the Exchequer to endanger his Government by proposing new sources of taxation which would be unpopular throughout the country, and he could not blame the right honourable Gentleman if he declined to walk into the snare laid for him by the Opposition, instead of taking the more cautious course he adopted. There was, however, danger to the country lest the necessity for popularity,

or rather the necessity of avoiding unpopularity, should impel them into methods of cowardly, niggardly, or paltry finance. It was, perhaps, utopian to hope that finance, like their foreign policy, might be removed beyond the sphere of Party politics, but he thought that in times of crisis, or when they were preparing for a great national emergency, there might be some co-operation between Chancellors of the Exchequer, present and potential, and that with the approbation of Leaders on both sides, something might be done by the imposition of some tax, direct or indirect, that should, without exemption or fear or favour, bring home to every man in the country the responsibility of his vote. It seemed to him that it was unfair that any charge for any great national object should be laid upon any class exclusively. The great and salutary lesson should be taught that those who have sanctioned expenditure for the national defence should also take their part in paying the bill. He begged to give his most hearty support to the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because he was convinced that the line he had taken would meet with the concurrence of the business community of the country, and would obtain, not only the approval, but the gratitude of the country at large.

MR. MOULTON (Cornwall, Launceston) said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer drew from the various Amendments the idea that there was a difference of opinion among Members of the Opposition on the subject, but the right honourable Gentleman would find that there was no difference of opinion on the main point of the Budget, namely, that increased taxation was to be avoided in the circumstances of the year by diminishing the amount for the repayment of the Debt. It appeared to him that the reasons on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had based his action were not only equally open to criticism, but were more injurious even than the step he had taken with regard to taxation itself. He admitted that the circumstances of the day were exceptional, but exceptional in a very different way from that in which they were regarded by honourable Members on the other side. He did not agree entirely with the limited view that paying off the Debt was a payment into the war chest, unless it was meant to

leave the nation with a greater reserve of strength for any exceptional trial or calamity. It appeared to him that the sanction of the regular payments of the Debt was far higher than that. It was that while they had a right to call on their successors to assist in bearing exceptional expenditure, they could not do that with a good conscience unless they felt that they too had borne their share of the exceptional expenditure of their predecessors. He was astonished to hear the references of the honourable Member for Peckham to the enormous sacrifices which the country had made in paying off the Debt. It had only paid off one-fifth of the Debt in the sixty years of Her Majesty's reign. Was that an enormous sacrifice for a great nation? The fact was that the figures were so large, and the amount of the Debt itself so overwhelming, that it was considered astonishing that they were not satisfied at a payment of seven millions. That was because it was forgotten that the Debt itself was between 600 and 700 millions. They had tried several methods of reducing the Debt, and of keeping before the mind of the people the duty of doing so. They had invented the system of terminable annuities, and in Sir Stafford Northcote's time a fixed Debt charge was introduced, which was a most excellent idea. What he felt that they had a right to complain of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for was, that his argument struck at the root of all attempts to pay off the National Debt within anything like a reasonable time. The right honourable Gentleman's argument was that supposing the interest on the Debt was reduced, clearly the taxpayers of the moment had a right to take the benefit of that reduction. But he saw no reason why the fall in the rate of interest should release the taxpayers from a simple duty. Suppose the rate of interest had gone up for some reason instead of down, would that have been a reason for their not paying off the same as they would under more fortunate circumstances? In fact, in his view, as the interest went down, they ought to increase rather than decrease the amount of Debt paid off. A still more dangerous argument was, that as we paid off the Debt and the Debt got smaller, we ought to lessen the amount devoted to Debt extinction. Now that was exactly opposed to Sir Stafford Northcote's principle of a fixed Debt

charge. The essence of a fixed Debt charge was that you paid a certain amount every year, and gradually the proportion that went to the extinction of the capital Debt got larger and larger every year. But if they diminished the reduction of Debt in proportion to the amount of the Debt, there was not a man who knew anything about figures who would not say that meant they were not going to pay off the Debt for a whole eternity. But it was further said that they ought to diminish the amount paid off in proportion, not to the amount of the Debt, but to the amount, which was decreasing more rapidly every year, of the Debt in the hands of the public. On that principle they would pay off more slowly than ever. If these arguments were to be treated as a justification for relaxing efforts for the payment of the Debt there was no chance whatever for future Chancellors of Exchequer ever contemplating the extinction of the Debt at all. They had had this year, in support of the action—which might be right or might be wrong—four reasons assigned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for diminishing the Debt charge in a prosperous year, any one of them being sufficient to excuse, under any circumstances, any future Chancellor of Exchequer, however cowardly he might be in regard to increased taxation, or however faithless he might be to his duty of keeping up the discharge of the Debt, for not keeping up the amount of Debt to be paid off. He regretted more than the diminution of the Debt charge by two millions the reasons which had been assigned for diminishing it. The only way was to fix a standard of sacrifice, and to keep to that through evil report and good report. Unless they did that the sense of duty in regard to paying off the Debt would wax feebler and feebler, and the result would be a recognition by the Government of the perpetuity of the burden, which would be a disgrace to an honourable commercial nation like England. So much for the reasons which depended on abstract matters. Let them turn to the excuses given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in this particular instance for relaxing the payment of the Debt. Those reasons were equally bad and equally effective in any year; but those which depended on the circumstances of the moment were, if possible, worse. In the first place the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that three or four

years hence, thanks to the sacrifices of their predecessors, the interest charged on the Debt would be greatly reduced. That was a strange reason. Because some years hence the interest on the Debt charge would be reduced, they should take advantage of it before it came! But it was still more strange, when they considered that that was the result of the sacrifices of past years, in the hope that the Debt would be got rid of in a reasonable time, to make that an excuse for not imitating those efforts, but for relaxing them. Another reason given was that Consols were very dear, and they had to pay a premium for them if they wanted to buy them back. He did not understand how the present Chancellor of the Exchequer could put that forward as effective in the present year. In 1903 there were the Two-and-a-Half per Cents, which could be redeemed to the extent of something like 20 millions, and the consequence was that, instead of taking up Consols about 110 or 111, they could get them at 103. He did not want to rest on that, because he thought that the question as to the effect on the national finances of Consols being at a premium was one that ought to be looked at in the face. Sooner or later it would come plainly before the House that the price of Consols corresponded with the fact that the rate of interest for such a security as that was not much above 2 per cent. They saw the Two-and-a-Half per Cents, going to be paid off in 1905 standing at 103, and those that were going to be paid off in 1923 standing at about 113. Persons who bought these were investing their money so as to receive 2 per cent. upon it. Therefore they had got to consider that in all departments of national finance interest on money was 2 per cent., and when they bought Consols at 110, not only was the capital indebtedness of £100 which was paid off in 1923 got rid of, but also the 2½ per cent. per annum which had to be paid for the intervening years, one half per cent. of which was exaggerated interest. How, therefore, could it be said that it was a loss to buy Consols at 110? He trusted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would consider what ought to be done in regard to the savings of the nation. Either he must go on purchasing Consols at 110, which he had shown would be a bargain involving no loss, or he was bound to face the difficulty of finding some other method of investing

the savings of the nation. If the price of Consols was fictitious, just consider the iniquity of the position which compelled the Government to invest in Consols and in kindred stocks, the balance of the deposits in the savings banks. They were making them buy a security which was not worth the money they were paying for it. He believed himself that it would be found that the fall in interest was the true cause of the rise in the price of the security. Instead of discharging Debt they were taking up liabilities every year which did not appear in the National Debt accounts, and every penny so taken up constituted a 2½ per cent. liability. The consequence was that they were adding to the liabilities of the country every day. Surely that was a state of things which ought to make them pause. But if our liabilities were greater than we had realised, surely that was a reason why they should still continue to save. Anything was better than at this moment to abandon saving; and that was what was proposed to be done to the extent of no less than two millions a year at this critical moment. He noticed that many honourable Members seemed to think that there was a Heaven-sent method of escaping this rigorous examination of the state of things by reason of the fact that we could use terminable annuities. Now, terminable annuities had completely changed their character since Consols had gone above par, and the amount paid off every year was larger than that taken by private persons on the terminable annuities. Changing £20,000,000 of Consols in the hands of a Government Department for terminable annuities was practically a pure illusion. If we were going to spend £20,000,000 in terminable annuities and to pay a million more in interest on that stock, the only change that was made was that that Department of Government had got a good investment for these millions instead of the National Debt Commissioners. Those sums in the hands of the Government Departments represented the sums that they had to keep at interest in order to meet the liabilities of the Savings Bank Fund. The consequence was that unless they were prepared to enlarge the list of securities in which the Savings Bank could invest, they were doing very little indeed in taking to terminable annuities. He was himself perfectly convinced that when this matter was looked into,

when they decided whether they were going to lower the interest on the Savings Bank deposits or not, and when they realised what a fearful thing it would be if, for the next 20 years, they were to diminish their efforts at saving simply because they had to buy Consols at a premium, he thought they would have to take some form of investment so as to prevent a very exaggerated price of Consols. But if he was right in thinking that the true rate of interest had fallen to 2 per cent., they would never get any other value for Consols than that which represented the premium that ought to be paid upon them, because they could not be paid off till 1923. He asked the House what reason was there, at a time of unexampled prosperity, for their shirking the two millions of the burden which last year and the year before, and the year before that again, they had borne. Why should they not pay their fair share this year? It was idle to talk of the nation not paying off Debt till 1923 because Consols could in that year be redeemed at a lower price. Each year the nation changed. The nation of this year ought to face its duty, and they would be unable to maintain their high standard in the years to come if they allowed such trivial excuse as that. How could they expect the nation that would come after to be more conscientious. See what the result would be. There was a Debt of 640 millions, and seven millions were held to be too much by which to reduce it every year, and it was curtailed to five millions. But if they only paid off Debt at the rate of five millions a year instead of seven, that meant that it would take something like 130 years before the existing Debt was paid off. And who would venture to say that throughout those 130 years England would have the same power to bear a heavy Debt as now? This was the heyday of national prosperity, largely on account of our trade conditions and our position. But it was known that our finest resources—our coal and iron—were diminishing very fast. Could it be suggested that any one of them, as an honest man, could be entitled to say that he was so justified in thinking that the prosperity of England would last another 100 years, that we need not pay off our Debt. By resorting to this species of repudiation they would be lowering the national standard to a great degree. The burden of the speech of the Chancellor of

the Exchequer was that the poor did not like taxation, and the Government would not put it on the rich; therefore, what could they do but diminish the payment of the Debt? It was an act of dishonesty towards posterity to actually diminish the standard of Debt discharge fixed years ago and loyally adhered to so long.

*Mr. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) thought that, as to the propriety of paying off Debt when Consols were at a high premium, almost everything had been said that could be said without going deep into technical details. Honourable Gentlemen opposite must not suppose that he was content with a state of things in which we were gradually converting the National Debt from an irredeemable annuity into a debt which was payable in cash at sight. That was not a satisfactory state of things. It had been assumed all through the Debate that this was a year, not only of prosperity, but also of peace. It was nothing of the kind. If he might borrow the expression used in one of the earlier Debates by his honourable and gallant Friend the Member for the Woodbridge Division, that peace, if it existed, was a precarious peace. It was a peace which we could only maintain by this gigantic expenditure. The peace which the country enjoyed at the present time could not be said to be further from war than was the peace in 1878 and 1885, in both of which years the Sinking Fund was partly suspended, except by the use of arguments too thin to stand the test of examination. In 1878, it was thought fit by Sir Stafford Northcote to suspend the Sinking Fund, as we wanted to prevent Russia from going to Constantinople, and we thereby made such preparations as prevented a war with Russia. In 1885, we suspended the Sinking Fund again to prevent Russia from going to Herat, and in that way again prevented Russia from assuming a position which menaced the peace of the whole Empire. The difficulty of the present Debate was that Her Majesty's Ministers could not, from considerations of international relations, use the arguments which would be the virtual defence of their policy, and he must say that he did not think honourable and right honourable Gentlemen opposite had made fair use of the advantage they thus enjoyed. The present situation was this, that when they reflected upon the events of 1898, there

was not a man in the House who could say with certainty that we should not have been at war if in 1898 our Navy and national defences had been relatively to those of other nations such as they were, say, before the initiation of the Spencer programme of 1894. Did any man doubt that if now we were to allow our defensive power to fall behind that of other States, it was more than likely that we should be at war for our national existence? As alternatives to the suspension of the Sinking Fund, they had had specific proposals from a number of Members, but none from the Member for West Monmouth, and it was only from his record that they could venture to guess what his alternatives would be. The right honourable Gentleman was great upon courage, but he had never faced a deficit except by one of three methods. He either taxed those who were certain to vote against him, and from whom he therefore had nothing to fear, or he taxed those who were electorally so insignificant that it required no courage at all to tax them; or to meet a temporary financial deficit he was content to go on with ships without guns, or with guns without ammunition. He (Mr. Stuart Wortley) was glad that the present Government had not courage of that kind. The best part, to his thinking, of the proposed suspension of the Sinking Fund was its presumptive permanence. The present situation consisted of a rivalry for supremacy, and the only way to stop that rivalry and the consequent abnormal expenditure was to indicate to other nations that whatever they spent on armaments, we would spend as much and more. To such contest there could only be one end, and those must win to whom the contest was not a question of mere adventure, but of national existence and of life and death. Such a struggle had now been forced on us by Powers that need not be named; and he was glad the Government, by having the courage to make permanent provision for the expenditure thereby rendered necessary, were doing that which was most likely to remove the causes which led to our present financial necessities.

*MR. MENDL (Plymouth) said it was a fundamental fallacy to treat our armaments as if they were all that was necessary in case of a European war. The possibility of our being able to succeed

in the event of war would depend upon the financial reserve we had in hand, and that reserve seemed to him to be very seriously impaired by the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Surely, in a time of prosperity, it was our business to do all we could to keep up the payment of the Debt in order to provide for any emergency which might arise. The question of the present price of Consols had really nothing whatever to do with the matter of our obligation to pay off Debt. He was very glad to hear that the Government had agreed to an inquiry into the question of the Savings Banks, and pointed out that since the limit of deposits had been increased to £300, which had, of course, increased competition in the Consol market, Savings Bank investments could not be said to be those of the working classes so much as formerly, and it was not right that the Government should practically make a money present to a class of people very well able to take care of themselves. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposal as to the Sinking Fund simply meant that the Debt would be extinguished in 1959 instead of in 1943, and that meant that for 16 years the country would have to go on paying interest on, and cost of management of, the Debt longer, in consequence of the successive reductions of the Fund made by the right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. He protested that we had a right to consider the taxpayers of the next generation. He asserted that the proposal was disapproved of by business people of all shades of opinion in the country, and that it would ultimately prove the Nemesis of the Government.

MR. COURTNEY moved the adjournment of the Debate at midnight.

REPORT OF SUPPLY.

The Report of Supply of Friday last—the Education Estimates—was brought up, and, on the Question that the House agree with the Resolution then arrived at in Committee,

SIR J GORST rose and said: Just before the Committee of Supply closed

on Friday night, the right honourable Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition was pleased to make some personal observations about myself. I had, in my statement, laid before the House matters of very grave importance connected with the education of the country, and matters of far greater importance than any question of any person's personal position or interests. The Debate throughout the evening had been maintained at a very high level, and I was extremely sorry that at the very end it should have been dragged down by so small and unimportant a matter as that brought forward by the right honourable Gentleman. The House of Commons has a right to call upon any Minister of the Crown to explain his position at any time, and when the Leader of the Opposition has seen fit to challenge me to explain my position with the Government, I think it is only due to him and to the House of Commons that I should as shortly as possible do so. I am sure the House of Commons will give me that fair treatment and courtesy which it always shows to Ministers. Since the present Government has been in office the Duke of Devonshire has been the head of the Education Department. I have never been the head of that Department; I have only been a subordinate member of it. I know I have said so repeatedly in the House of Commons, but they have been reluctant to believe me—I believe chiefly because my predecessor, Mr. Acland, was at the head of the Department and held a position very different to that which I hold. He had powers which I do not possess; he had responsibilities which are not properly thrown upon me. I heard said—in fact, it was publicly stated—that an attack was to be made on Friday night on my position in the Government, and I therefore read to the Committee, with the approval of the Lord President, whom I consulted on the subject, the Order in Council which defined the constitutional position of the Vice-President, and which explained the position which he actually holds in the present Government. I have never found any difficulty in acting as a subordinate official of the Duke of Devonshire and in carrying out the various directions, administrative and legislative, which I have received from him, because, if I may be allowed to say so, the views and opinions of the Lord

President and myself upon the subject of education are entirely in sympathy with each other. In my remarks on Friday night I went on to say there never has been a difference of opinion between us. On some minor questions I should be very sorry to try to make the Lord President responsible for every expression I have used in Debate in this House; but upon all questions, upon all important questions, we are entirely in sympathy, and the general education policy which I have propounded and tried to enforce in this House is entirely in accord with my noble Friend's opinions and views. Then it is said that the Department has been several times overruled by the Government. No doubt it has. But Departments are overruled by all Governments, because a Department looks upon a question only from its own point of view. The Government has to look at it, in addition, as it relates to the general policy and the general proceedings of the country. We have frequently desired to make reforms in education for which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us he could not find any money. We have often desired to have Bills promoted in this House, when the Government have thought that other Measures were more important and pressing, and that ours must give way. But if, when a Department was overruled by the Government, the Parliamentary officials of that Department were all to resign, it would be quite impossible to carry on the government of the country. There is no doubt that cases may arise—I believe extremely rarely—but cases may arise in which the head of a Department might find it to be his duty to resign. But surely that is a function that should be discharged in the first instance by the head of the Department, and not by a subordinate official. The present Lord President of the Council is a man of very much longer and very much more extensive political experience than I, and is a man who, I believe, on both sides of the House is regarded as the very embodiment of political honour, and so long as he is able to continue to hold his office and to continue to act with the Government as the head of the Educational Department it would be in my opinion a piece of rashness and presumption on the part of the second officer of the Department to presume to resign his office and thus inflict an un-

founded censure upon his chief for not having taken the same course. Now, I think the intention to attack the office which I hold was a little interfered with by my reading out the Order in Council on Friday night; therefore, the right honourable Gentleman was good enough to supplement his attack by an insinuation that I conveyed to the House matters in such a form as to ridicule the Department to which I belonged and the Lord President who is my chief. He said—

“When he speaks of the Department and the President of the Council there is a hardly disguised ridicule conveyed to the House.”

Now, I have always tried to enliven the dull speeches which I am often obliged to make to the House by harmless pleasantry, which I thought sometimes amused the House. But I deny with the utmost indignation that I have ever cast ridicule either upon the Department to which I belong or upon its chief, the President of the Council. This is not the first time that an insinuation of this kind has been made against me, and, oddly enough, by the same right honourable Gentleman, because, as he had the temerity to remind the House on Friday night, he made a similar charge against me in reference to Lord Cross when I held the office of Under Secretary of State for India. These sort of insinuations are obviously intended to sow dissension between Members of the Government. On that occasion the right honourable Gentleman entirely failed, because I remained for a long time after that Under Secretary of State for India, and during the whole of the time I held that office I retained the full confidence of my noble Friend Lord Cross, and he refuted in the strongest terms that he had any idea that there was any truth whatever in the insinuation which the right honourable Gentleman made. I believe I have now exactly in the same way the confidence of the Duke of Devonshire. Why should I seek to cast ridicule on the Department with whose policy in education I entirely agree, and why should I try to cast ridicule on the chief for whose political career and political honour I have the profound respect which I entertain for the Duke of Devonshire? To misinterpret anything which I may have said in the House of Commons as a desire to cast ridicule upon my chief is an accusation which I do not think the

right honourable Gentleman should have made, and as it was made in the House of Commons, I in the House of Commons beg most emphatically to repudiate it. I wish the House of Commons to understand that I discharge the duties which are made in the Order in Council, the duties which I understand to be the duties of my office: that I am not responsible for the policy, I am not responsible for what is done in this House, except in the sense in which a person that has received directions is bound to carry those directions out and to defend that policy in the House when it is assailed. And as long as I retain, as I believe I do retain, the confidence of my chief, the Duke of Devonshire, and his colleagues, I do not care what the right honourable Gentleman or those who support him may say of me.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The right honourable Gentleman, Mr. Speaker, has thought fit, and I am not surprised, to recur to the subject which we treated of on Friday night. The right honourable Gentleman speaks of a personal attack which I made upon him, and he appears to think that that attack came in opportunely or improperly at the end of a Debate upon educational topics, which was of an unusually elevated tone. I quite agree with him in that, and I said so the other night. But it was the right honourable Gentleman himself who opened the subject of his own personal position in his speech in introducing the Vote to the House. He anticipated that he was to be attacked, and he proceeded to give us that defence of himself which he thought would be most effective by reading the exact terms of the Order in Council which defines his duties in his Department. Therefore, it would have been a strange thing indeed if I had not taken any notice at all of that part of the right honourable Gentleman's speech. But the right honourable Gentleman complains, or, at any rate, in extenuation of anything he may do, asserts, that he is not at the head of his Department; that he, therefore, is not in the same position as his immediate predecessor, Mr. Acland, and that he cannot be expected to have, as it were, a policy of his own on educational matters. But Mr. Acland was not the right honourable Gentleman's only predecessor. We can go back to the days when my friend, the late Mr. Mundella, occupied exactly the same position as the right honourable

Gentleman for many years—not a member of the Cabinet, serving under the Lord President, and yet practically directing the educational policy of the country, and, at all events, never provoking those curious little episodes which have been periodic in the case of the right honourable Gentleman. The truth is that the right honourable Gentleman has a pretty turn for ironical wit, and he cannot help bringing that ironical wit into play even when he is speaking of so exalted a person as the head of his own Department. He assures us that when we find him taking a line in argument or in action in the House which we find difficult to reconcile with what appears to be the ordinary course which his duty would prescribe for him, he says that he is perfectly at one with the Lord President. The Lord President is a mythical person to us. We look to the right honourable Gentleman for the exposition of the policy of his Department, and it is because we find him constantly—I will speak plainly on the subject—constantly speaking of himself on these questions with his tongue in his cheek, it is on that ground that I think I am justified in saying that there is some ridicule—I think the word I used was contempt, but I may have used the word ridicule—thrown upon any doings of his Department. If the House wishes to have an example of the very thing I am speaking of, we need not go further back than the speech he has now delivered, because, when referring to the suggestion that if his action and his opinions differ so much from those which commend themselves to the Government, as they have on some occasions, he should resign his office, he immediately suggests that the President of the Council ought to resign.—

SIR J. GORST: I never said that.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: And that so long as the President of the Council, who has such a high sense of honour, remains in his office, the right honourable Gentleman himself is perfectly entitled to remain where he is. All I have to say is, and I say it openly, my quarrel is not with the right honourable Gentleman. I did justice, think, the other night, in speaking of him, to his great and known ability, and even to that very humorous turn which we all so much admire in him, but my

quarrel is much more with Her Majesty's Government for allowing this great question of national education to be made, as it were, the sport of the light fancy of the right honourable Gentleman. It has been apparent to us for a long time. Actually, we have had a Bill on an educational question introduced and passed through the House upon which the right honourable Gentleman was not allowed—or, at all events, as a matter of fact upon which he did not take any part from first to last—

SIR J. GORST: Oh, I beg your pardon, if the right honourable Gentleman is referring to the Education Bill of 1897 I spoke several times, both on the Bill and in Committee.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There may have been just enough of interference to prevent the absolute accuracy of the allegation of total abstinence, but, at all events, the right honourable Gentleman ostentatiously remained at the far end of the Bench during the greater part of the discussion, and he has been in the habit of conducting the business which falls to him as a representative of the Department with that spirit and in that way which certainly does not conduce to satisfactory progress. I know I am speaking the opinion, not of myself or of my immediate friends, but of the great majority of the House, when I say that we have never seen the affairs of a Department conducted in the manner in which the right honourable Gentleman seems to think it becoming to conduct the great questions with which he deals. It is on that ground that I made the observations which I made the other night, to which I adhere, and which I think have met with the approval of most of those who watch the proceedings in educational matters of this country. As I said before, my complaint is rather against the Government than against the right honourable Gentleman. Let the Government avail themselves of the benefit of being able to command the services of the right honourable Gentleman by putting him into some other place where he will not have a Lord President, or even a Committee of the Privy Council, and where he will have the liberty of independent action, then I have no doubt they will derive great use from his assistance. But in the present position in which he stands, so long as his duties are conducted in the manner to which we

have become accustomed, I am afraid that all the friends of education will see much to complain of in the arrangement.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The right honourable Gentleman has made what he describes as an attack on Her Majesty's Government. He has carefully abstained from pretending that his attack was directed against the Vice-President, but he has said that it is directed rather against Her Majesty's Government than against any particular Minister. We owe a great deal to the Leaders of the Opposition in this House, and, among other Leaders, to the right honourable Gentleman. They perform useful and important functions, but it has never been pretended that it falls within their province to determine either who are to form part of Her Majesty's Government or what particular offices the Gentlemen who are to form part of it are to fill. It appears that the right honourable Gentleman has carefully watched the career of the Vice-President. He has studied his speeches and his performances. He admires his wit, and has a great opinion of his humour; but, says the right honourable Gentleman, the Vice-President of the Council would be rather more suited to some other office than the office of Education. The right honourable Gentleman really must allow Her Majesty's Government to settle their own little internal affairs for themselves. The time will no doubt come when the right honourable Gentleman will give important advice on the constitution of a Government which no doubt will have the great weight which ought to attach to the advice he may give; but the Government to be formed on his advice will not be formed by Gentlemen on this side of the House, and as far as they are concerned, he must permit us—I say it with all respect—to form our own Administration in our own fashion.

MR. J. ELLIS complained that the right honourable Gentleman had not dealt with the constitutional point which had been made by his right honourable Friend, with whose views he desired to associate himself. He was astonished that the Leader of the House did not rise on Friday evening, when he had ample time to do so, to reply then to his right honourable Friend. It was not for the Vice-President of the Council to do so; it was for the Leader of the House. In order to show how these proceedings

struck the outside public, he quoted from the leading article in "The Times" of that morning, in which it was said "the joke has gone too far." To that remark he quite agreed. He also endorsed the observation made by his right honourable Friend (Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman) that education was a sacred measure, and he had been disgusted at the levity of tone imported into the Debates by the right honourable Gentleman. They were dealing with the interests of millions of people and children in this country, and it was the right of the House in this sacred matter to have someone on that Bench who spoke with the authority of the Government, and who would perform the functions that he was glad to acknowledge the other Members on the Treasury Bench, of whom he could speak with respect, had faithfully performed. He hoped the Leader of the House would take this matter into serious consideration, and before the House met again next February would give them someone in the place of the right honourable Gentleman.

The Resolution was then agreed to.

SOLICITORS BILL [H.L.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLAUSE 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday.

SUPREME COURT (APPEALS) BILL [H.L.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLAUSE 2.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday.

BUSINESS DEFERRED.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday 19th June.

UNIVERSITY DEGREES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

TELEGRAPHS (TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION, ETC.) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

METROPOLITAN STREETS ACT (1867) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

COLONIAL LOANS FUND BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [9th March] further adjourned till this day.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [23rd February] further adjourned till Thursday.

INEBRIATES ACT (1898) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till this day.

IMPROVEMENT OF LAND BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

CHARITABLE LOANS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

PALATINE COURT OF DURHAM BILL [H.L.]

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING (CLAUSES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

FARNLEY TYAS MARRIAGES BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

TELEGRAPH (CHANNEL ISLANDS) BILL [H.L.]

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE ((SCOTLAND) BILL.

Committee deferred till Thursday.

SUPPLY.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

INDICTMENTS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday 16th May.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday 17th May.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Second Reading [8th March] further adjourned till Thursday.

PLACES OF WORSHIP (LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till this day.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till this day.

COUNTY COUNCILLORS (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday 29th May.

MERCHANT SEAMEN (RATING CERTIFICATES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till this day.

MIDWIVES BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [12th April] further adjourned till Monday next.

SHOPS BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [21st February] further adjourned till Thursday.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION ACT (1879) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

TANCRED'S CHARITIES SCHEME CONFIRMATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

EXECUTORS (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till this day.

The House adjourned at thirty-five minutes after Twelve of the clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 2nd May 1899.

The LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat upon the Woolsack at Four of the clock.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND.

Earl of Clonmell—Lord Clarina—Earl of Mountcashell.

Ordered and Directed, That Certificates be sent by the Clerk of the Parliaments to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland, stating that the Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom has reported to the House of Lords that the right of the Earl of Clonmell, the Lord Clarina, and the Earl of Mountcashell to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of him the said Lord Chancellor; and that the House of Lords has ordered such reports to be sent to the said Clerk of the Crown in Ireland: And it is hereby also Ordered, That the said Reports of the said Lord Chancellor be sent to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have now been complied with—

Owen's College, Manchester—(Petition for Bill).

The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

LONDON, WALTHAMSTOW, AND EPPING FOREST RAILWAY (No. 2.)

Examiner's Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Monday next.

MILWALL DOCK.

Examiner's Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Monday next.

BROOKE'S PARK, LONDONDERRY.

Examiner's Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Monday next.

OWEN'S COLLEGE, MANCHESTER.

Examiner's Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Monday next.

MOSS SIDE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL (TRAMWAYS) BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on the 27th of February and Tuesday last discharged; and Bill committed.

GLASGOW CORPORATION (TRAMWAYS, Etc.) BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Select Committee with amendments.

GLASGOW CORPORATION (GAS AND WATER) BILL [H.L.]

Reported with amendments.

HASTINGS AND ST. LEONARDS GAS BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Select Committee with amendments.

CLAY CROSS WATER BILL.

Reported without amendment

INFANT ORPHAN ASYLUM BILL [H.L.]

Reported with an amendment.

STOCKTON AND MIDDLESBROUGH
WATER BILL [H.L.]

Reported with amendments.

FRIENDS' PROVIDENT INSTITUTION
BILL [H.L.]

Reported with amendments.

LIVERPOOL OVERHEAD RAILWAY
BILL [H.L.]

Committee to meet on Thursday next.

ILFORD GAS BILL.

Committee to meet on Thursday next.

PORT TALBOT RAILWAY AND DOCKS
BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on the 2nd of March and 20th of April last discharged; and Bill committed.

WOODHOUSE AND CONISBROUGH
RAILWAY (ABANDONMENT) BILL.

Read the second time, and committed.

SOUTHAMPTON CORPORATION WATER
BILL [H.L.]

Read the third time, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

BURY CORPORATION BILL [H.L.]

Read the third time, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

SKIPTON URBAN DISTRICT GAS BILL
[H.L.]

Read the third time, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

FARNLEY TYAS MARRIAGES BILL.

Brought from the Commons.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL
ORDERS (No. 1) BILL.

Brought from the Commons.

PILOTAGE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Brought from the Commons.

MIDLAND AND SOUTH WESTERN
JUNCTION RAILWAY.

Brought from the Commons; read the first time; and referred to the Examiners.

MANCHESTER CORPORATION TRAM-
WAYS BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Select Committee with amendments.

OLDHAM CORPORATION BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Select Committee with amendments.

Metropolitan Water Companies Bill.

Humber Conservancy Bill [H.L.]

Great Northern Railway Bill [H.L.]

Transvaal Mortgage Loan and Finance
Company Bill [H.L.]

Loughborough Corporation Bill [H.L.]

North Eastern and Hull and Barnsley
Railways (Joint Stock) Bill [H.L.]

North Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.]

Maryport Harbour Bill [H.L.]

Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; namely—

V. Falkland.

L. Ribblesdale (chairman)

L. De Mauley.

L. Wrottesley.

L. Newton.

Agreed to and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet on Friday next, at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS, 1899.

Annual Series:

No. 2238. China (Swatow);

No. 2239. United States (Chicago, etc.):

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

COPYRIGHT BILL [H.L.]

AND

COPYRIGHT (ARTISTIC) BILL [H.L.]

The evidence taken before the Select Committee to be printed for the use of the Members of this House; but no copies thereof to be delivered, except to Members of the Committee, until further order. (No. 71.)

HOUSE OF LORDS AND COMMONS PERMANENT STAFF.

The evidence taken before the Joint Committee from time to time to be printed for the use of the Members of this House; but no copies thereof to be delivered, except to Members of the Committee, until further order. (No. 72.)

PETITION.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS.

Petition against the sale of, to children under the age of thirteen; of Guardians of the Samford Union; read, and ordered to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

TRAMWAYS ORDERS CONFIRMATION (No 1) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Tramways Act, 1870, relating to Aberdeen Corporation Tramways, Devonport Corporation Tramways, Halifax Corporation Tramways, Matlock Urban District Tramways, Perth and District Tramways, and Reading Corporation Tramways. (No. 73.)

Presented by the Earl Waldegrave (for the Earl of Dudley); read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

TRAMWAYS ORDERS CONFIRMATION (No. 2) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Tramways Act, 1870, relating to Audenshaw Urban District Tramways, Clayton Tramways, Eccles Corporation Tramways, Ilkeston Corporation Tramways, Queensbury Tramway, and Southport Corporation Tramways. (No. 74.)

Presented by the Earl Waldegrave (for the Earl of Dudley); read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

TRAMWAYS ORDERS CONFIRMATION (No 3) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Tramways Act, 1870, relating to Barking Town Urban District Tramways, Blackpool Corporation Tramways, Dudley and Wolverhampton Tramways,

Gravesend, Rosherville, and Northfleet Tramways, Ilford Urban District Tramways, and Wrexham District Tramways. (No. 75.)

Presented by the Earl Waldegrave (for the Earl of Dudley); read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLY: My Lords, I have to present a petition from the Birmingham School Board in which a number of the clauses of the Board of Education Bill are criticised. The noble Duke the Lord President of the Council will be very glad to hear that the petitioners approve generally of the Bill, but there are several provisions to which they have considerable objection. They are strongly opposed to section 2 of clause 3, which provides that the council of any county or county borough may, out of any money applicable for the purposes of technical education, pay or contribute to the expense of inspecting under this section of any school within their county or borough. This, they say, places the councils in a position of control over inspection. The petitioners also take very great exception to the action of the Education Department with regard to technical schools.

BOARD OF EDUCATION BILL.

On Clause 1.

Amendment proposed—

"Clause 1, page 1, line 5, leave out from 'be' to the end of line 12, and insert 'a Secretary for Education appointed by Her Majesty, and holding office during Her Majesty's pleasure.'"—(Lord Norton.)

***LORD NORTON** said they must all feel extremely indebted to the noble Duke the Lord President of the Council for this Bill, but he thought the opinion was general that a Secretary for Education would be more efficient than a Board, which would be little better than a sham. It was a notorious fact that the Boards of Trade and Agriculture

never met, and he believed that putting education under a similar Board would be absolutely mischievous. He had been told, but was surprised to hear it, that the Council had sometimes been called together on education. He recollected when he was Vice-President the Council being called together on one occasion, and the anger of Mr. Disraeli at their being summoned so uselessly. The appointment of a Board of Education would relieve the Minister of feeling of responsibility. He had never heard any reason given in favour of a Board in preference to a Minister except it was that by the appointment of a Board there would be someone to take the place of the responsible head if he fell ill. The Secretary for Scotland had no Board, but if he fell ill there would be someone to take his place. This argument was an absurd one to put forward in favour of a Board. He had strong objection to the appointment of deputies in case of illness, because when a deputy was appointed the chief invariably fell ill. For centuries the Speaker of the House of Commons was never away through illness, but when a deputy was appointed to take his place in case of indisposition the Speaker immediately fell ill. This Board was to consist of a President—no doubt meaning, though without any reason, the Lord President of the Council—the five principal Secretaries of State, the First Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This was a large provision for the Education Minister's possible illness. He thought that his Amendment would make the Bill a stronger and better Measure, but another objection to it, he understood, was based on financial reasons. If such a Secretary of State, as he suggested, was appointed, as in the case of the Secretary for Scotland, they would avoid all objection of that kind. If they imitated that Department they would obviate all objections to a new Secretary of State, and get all the advantages of a really responsible Minister. A Board would act most injuriously to the Minister—it would screen him from blame if things went wrong, and deprive him from credit if things went right.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Duke of DEVONSHIRE): Although my noble Friend has several

times in the course of his observations spoken of his Amendment as one for substituting a Secretary of State for the board which is proposed in the Bill, that is not the effect of his Amendment, and I do not think it is what he really proposes. There are very obvious objections which I do not think it is necessary to enter into now to the multiplication of the important office of Secretary of State, and if it were proposed to create an additional Secretary of State it would be very hard indeed to say that the salary of that Secretary of State should be a different salary from that enjoyed by the other Secretaries of State. I think my noble Friend is quite mistaken in supposing that the powers of the Secretary for Scotland are in the least the same as those possessed by the principal Secretaries of State. What I take it the noble Lord really proposes is that the head of the new Educational Department shall be a Secretary for Education, and hold a similar office to that which was created by the appointment of a Secretary for the Administration of the Affairs of Scotland. As I stated on the Second Reading of the Bill, the two alternatives were discussed, and the conclusion arrived at was that there was no very striking reasons for giving the preference to the one organisation rather than to the other. The proposal in the Bill is, it appears to me, both reasonable and convenient, for whereas in the case of the Secretary for Scotland there would be no one to take his place in the event of his falling ill, in the case of the Board to be established by this Measure any of his colleagues on the board might temporarily exercise the duties of the President. As I stated on the Second Reading, there is no intention of the Board acting as a board. The President of the Board will be as responsible for educational policy as the President of the Board of Trade is for commercial policy and the various matters which fall within the scope of his Department. I can assure my noble Friend there is no intention whatever of evolving any sham responsibility. The object of appointing the Board is one of pure convenience, and I must say I do not see any reason from departing from the precedent which has been set in the case of the Board of Trade, the Local Government Board, and the Board of Agriculture.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I made one or two observations on this not very important point at an earlier stage of the Bill, and I must say I sympathise with the object of the noble Lord's Amendment, though I agree that it is quite out of the question to appoint a new Secretary of State. I quite agree with the noble Duke on that subject, but I do not think that the reason which is given for the creation of this Board is a really sufficient one. I imagine that it will not be difficult, in the case of illness of the Secretary of Education, to request some Member of the Cabinet to undertake for a time the business of the Department. There are precedents for such a course. When I was Lord Privy Seal I was asked to undertake the duties of President of the Board of Trade during the illness of Mr. Bryce, and still more recently, when the Prime Minister was ill and left the country at a time when important business had to be transacted, Mr. Balfour fulfilled the duties of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I never heard that this caused any inconvenience to the Government, or was found to be any embarrassment. I do not conceive that the resources of our legislation are so extremely poor that it is impossible to devise any scheme to meet the circumstances, but the absurd one of placing a number of people on a so-called board whom we are told are not intended to take part in the business of the board in a serious way. Personally, I prefer the arrangement suggested by the noble Lord opposite, though I cannot pretend to say that the matter is of very great importance.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: I am afraid the instances given by the noble Earl do not bear out his argument. I doubt very much indeed whether, if the noble Earl held the office of Lord Privy Seal and performed any act which is required by Act of Parliament to be performed by the Board of Trade or the President of the Board of Trade, he would be acting legally; and although it is quite true that the duties of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs were temporarily taken charge of by the First Lord of the Treasury in the circumstances mentioned, the noble Earl opposite must know that not a single dispatch could be sent by the First Lord of the Treasury which had not to be signed

as well by one of the other principal Secretaries of State. There are some inconveniences and difficulties in the course suggested by my noble Friend which can be obviated by the proposal in the Bill.

EARL SPENCER: I confess I share my noble Friend's sympathy with the Amendment of the noble Lord opposite. The Board to be established by the Bill is altogether delusive and misleads the public, who hold the belief that the Board will sit and consult with the Lord President and the Vice-President on important matters of education. I had the honour of being Lord "President" of the Council on two occasions, and I can only remember on one occasion calling the Board together. I can bear out what Lord Norton said with regard to Lord Beaconsfield, and I remember quite well how the Secretaries of State grumbled exceedingly at being called together to transact practically unimportant business. I do not agree with the noble Duke as to the illegality of appointing a substitute. For nearly two years I was Lord President without taking practically any part in the business of the office, because I was also at the time Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and during that period the then Lord Privy Seal acted for me as Lord President of the Council. I shall follow the noble Lord if he divides the House on his Amendment.

THE DUKE OF RUTLAND, while admitting that the arguments of the noble Lord who had moved the Amendment were worthy of consideration, also thought that there was much to be said on both sides, and was not prepared to express a definite opinion on the point. He well remembered the Council on Education being called together on several occasions to advise, and, he supposed, if necessary, to overrule the opinion of the President and the Vice-President.

***LORD NORTON** said he would not press his Amendment after the statement of the noble Duke the Lord President, but he did not consider that any substantial argument had been advanced against the Amendment. If the proposed Board had power to interfere with the

Lord President of the Council.

Minister, the result would be most mischievous. The Secretary for Scotland is the right precedent to follow.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

EARL SPENCER: I should be glad if the noble Duke would explain the future position of the Lord President in this House. As far as I understand the subsection, there may be a President or a Minister of Education in this House as well as a Lord President of the Council. I understood that when the President of this Board was in this House he was to be actually the Lord President. The words as they now stand do not convey that.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: I do not think I exactly understand the question of my noble Friend. The Bill certainly does not provide that the Lord President of the Council must necessarily be President of the Board.

EARL SPENCER: But when the President is in this House?

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: Nor then. The President of the Board may be a person other than the Lord President of the Council in this House, or in the other House.

Question put—

"That clause 1 stand part of the Bill."

Motion agreed to.

On clause 2, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury had the following Amendment on the Paper:—

"Clause 2, subsection 2, page 2, line 7, insert, 'Provided that in dealing with educational endowments of less than £50 a year the procedure shall be subject to clauses 33, 34, 35, 36, 41, 42, 43 of the Endowed Schools Act, 1869.'—(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.*)

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: I must address an appeal to the most reverend Prelate to be good enough to postpone this Amendment until the Report stage. The Amendment raises a question of very considerable importance, and of a rather intricate legal character as to the existing

functions of the Charity Commissioners, and as it only appeared on the Paper this morning I have not had an opportunity of consulting my legal advisers as to its effect. I certainly should not be prepared to accept it as it stands without a great deal of further consideration, and in these circumstances I would ask the Most Reverend Prelate to postpone the Amendment until the Report stage.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: I am quite prepared to postpone my Amendment, as suggested by the noble Duke.

Amendment, by leave, postponed.

Amendment proposed—●

"To leave out subsection 2."—(*Lord Colchester.*)

LORD COLCHESTER said his object in moving this Amendment, although he had little hope of inducing Her Majesty's Government to agree to abandon these powers, was to exclude from the operations of the Education Board any of the powers of the Charity Commissioners in matters relating to education. It was a very great advantage to have these schemes carried on by a body not in any way connected with the Government of the day or any political Party. If the proposal in the clause was carried out there would not be a second check on these schemes. They would be framed by the Education Department and would go direct to Parliament. If they were opposed they would be supported by the supporters of the Government of the day, and opposed by the Members of the Opposition. He contended that this would be an injury to the cause of education and the proper administration of endowed schools, which he did not think would be compensated for by any official or administrative convenience.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: The noble Lord, in moving this Amendment, has spoken of the duties of the Charity Commissioners, which it is proposed to take power to transfer to the new Board, as if they exclusively related to the framing of schemes. That is by no means the case. It is quite evident that if we are to have an Education Department at all, that Depart-

ment should be entrusted, at all events, with the power of supervising the administration of schemes which have been framed by the Endowed Schools Commissioners or the Charity Commissioners. I quite admit that the question of the future mode in which new schemes are to be framed may be one involving some considerable difficulty, and it is for that reason that the Bill does not propose to immediately transfer the whole of the powers in regard to the making of such schemes from the Charity Commissioners to the new Board. That can only be done by an Order in Council, which the Bill provides is to be laid before both Houses of Parliament, who will thus have an opportunity of expressing their opinion. I am inclined to think that these powers should, so far as they relate exclusively to educational matters, be exercised by the Education Department, rather than by such a body as the Charity Commissioners. The noble Lord will see that the Bill reserves to the Charity Commissioners in all cases the power to decide whether the endowment is educational or not; but when it has been decided that the endowment is an educational endowment, it is for the Education Department to say in what educational direction that endowment shall be applied. We quite admit, however, that there may be some practical difficulties in the way of a transfer, and till the Department is more thoroughly organised than it can be for some time to come we do not propose to effect any transfer, but reserve the power to do so by Order in Council, and both Houses of Parliament will have full opportunity of expressing their views.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I have heard with much satisfaction the statement of the noble Duke, because it seems to me that it is absolutely essential, as he has stated, to any real reform of our educational system that all the powers of the Charity Commissioners in regard to education itself should be transferred to the new Education Board. Last year, when the Bill was brought in, I ventured to remark that in my opinion the provisions were not sufficiently explicit on this subject, and I was extremely glad to see in the present Bill a plain statement as to the intentions of the Government, which, as I under-

stand them, are, that although they will not effect these transfers at once, all the powers of the Charity Commissioners, as regards education proper, will be taken over by the Board as soon as that Board is sufficiently organised. I do not question the necessity of allowing the Charity Commissioners to decide whether a certain school should be treated in a particular manner, and also to decide whether an endowment, or any part of an endowment, is held for, or ought to be applied to, educational purposes. That is a function they can properly perform, but the moment it is decided that any particular endowment is educational, then I understand all the powers in regard to that endowment will be transferred to the Education Board. I fully recognise the difficulty of making the transfer at once, but I trust there will be no unnecessary delay in doing so.

***LORD BARNARD.** who claimed to have had perhaps a greater experience of the Charity Commission than most of their Lordships, pointed out that the Charity Commissioners worked under two distinct sets of Acts of Parliament—the Charitable Trusts Acts and the Endowed Schools Acts. At the present time, although the Charity Commissioners did frame and prepare schemes under the Endowed Schools Acts, those schemes had to be laid before the Education Department and approved by them before they could become law. Therefore, at the present moment the Education Department had an absolute voice in controlling schemes affecting educational endowments. The Charity Commissioners since 1854 had been entrusted by the Legislature with a certain amount of control and supervision over charitable endowments of all kinds, and he assumed that if this transfer took place the Charity Commissioners would still continue to have the same power and control over educational endowments that they now had. He suggested that the noble Duke, without accepting the Amendment in its entirety, might at a later stage introduce an Amendment by which the present process would be reversed—namely, that the Education Department should have the initiation of schemes relating to educational endowments; but that no scheme should become law until it had been sub-

mitted to, and approved by, the Charity Commissioners, as the protectors of Charitable Endowments and Trusts of every description.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

EARL SPENCER: Before the clause is adopted I should like to ask the noble Duke a question upon it. This clause, I need hardly point out, is one of the most important clauses in the whole Bill. I am very glad the noble Lord has withdrawn his Amendment, because I think that if it had been carried one of the best parts of the Bill would have been struck out. I am very anxious to know what the intention of the Government is with regard to the Science and Art Department. I am one of those who feel very strongly the importance of secondary education in regard to technical education. Technical education in this country will never be successful unless secondary education is promoted to a much greater extent than is the case at present. There is a feeling abroad in certain quarters that the Government may, under the first section of this clause, leave the Science and Art Department exactly as it is now. While I believe that the past efforts of the Science and Art Department have done a great deal. I think great changes in the management of that Department are rendered necessary by the great advance of technical education. I wish to know whether the noble Duke intends to reorganise that Department!

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: I do not think it will be possible for me to say very much upon the future of the Science and Art Department until the Departmental Inquiry has taken place which I referred to on the Second Reading of the Bill. I quite admit that the Science and Art Department will have to be dealt with in a much larger manner than simply transferring it from South Kensington to Whitehall. Obviously, having established a Department responsible for the whole of the education of the country, secondary as well as elementary, it will be necessary that there should be a secondary education branch of that Department. The question has, I believe, been discussed in educational circles whether the organisation of the Department should be dual, or should contain three divi-

sions—whether there should be a division for elementary education, another for secondary education, and a third for technical education, or whether secondary education should include secondary education proper and technical education. Upon that point I should not like to express any decided opinion until the inquiry which we propose to institute has been concluded. But that there shall be a Secondary Education Department is an absolute necessity, and it must have a very close connection with, if it is not placed absolutely in charge of, technical education also.

***THE MARQUESS OF RIPON:** I do not rise to complain that the noble Duke has not been able to give a more definite answer at present, but I take the earliest opportunity of expressing an earnest hope that he will not separate what he calls secondary education proper from technical education.

Question put—

"That clause 2 stand part of the Bill."

Motion agreed to.

CLAUSE 3.

Amendment proposed—

"Page 2, after line 19, insert 'Provided that the inspection of schools established by scheme under the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, 1889, shall, subject to regulations made by the Treasury under section 9 of that Act, be conducted as heretofore by the Central Welsh Board for Intermediate Education.'—(*The Lord President of the Council.*)

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: The Amendment which I have to move to this clause is necessary to remove an apprehension which I found to exist, that the schools established under the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, 1889, would be subjected to inspection under this Bill to the prejudice of the inspection which is at present conducted by the Central Welsh Board. That inspection appears to give general satisfaction to the Principality of Wales, and this Amendment has been placed on the Paper in order to show that there is no intention to interfere with the existing system of inspection and the administration of secondary education by the Welsh Intermediate Education Board.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I have been informed, as the noble Duke has, that there is considerable apprehension on the part of those who are interested in intermediate education in Wales lest there should be any interference with the system of inspection which is carried on there with great success and, it appears, with complete satisfaction to all concerned. I felt quite certain it could not have been the intention of the noble Duke or of the Government to interfere with a system which appears to be carried on with very great success. Those with whom I have been in communication on the subject are quite satisfied with the Amendment of the noble Duke so far as it goes, but it has been suggested to me that it would give greater satisfaction to those who are interested in Welsh intermediate education if additional words were added to the Amendment. Possibly the noble Duke would prefer, and I certainly think it would be better, to consider this matter on the Report stage, when I will move to add the following words to the noble Duke's Amendment—

"And that the said Board shall be recognised as the proper organisation for the inspection of any such school as may be desirous of inspection under this section."

They feel afraid lest in the very hot competition which exists between these secondary schools there should be some desire on the part of some of them to get the additional advertisement of having been inspected by both the inspectors under this Act and the inspectors appointed by the Central Board. There seems to be some reason for these apprehensions, and if, as I am told, the inspection now carried into effect is perfectly satisfactory, thoroughly efficient, and working extremely well, I think it is not unnatural that there should be a great desire that no rival system of inspection should be introduced. We want a completely satisfactory system of inspection, and to put an end to overlapping. Assuming, as I think I have a right to assume, that the system of inspection as now established in Wales is a satisfactory system, I do not think it is at all unnatural that it is sought to make it impossible to be interfered with by this Bill.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: It will be more convenient,

as the noble Earl suggests, to take his Amendment on the Report stage.

Question put.

Amendment agreed to.

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: I should like the noble Duke to inform me whether under sub-section 2 of this clause, which says,

"The council of any county or county borough may out of any money applicable for the purposes of technical education pay or contribute to the expenses of inspecting under this section any school within their county or borough,"

the same restrictions that were placed upon county councils in the application of "beer" money to the purposes of technical education will also apply to any aid they may give to secondary education under this section.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: Although I cannot speak with any absolute certainty, my impression is that this section, so far as it goes, is an extension of the Act under which "beer" money is devoted to certain purposes. My noble Friend is no doubt aware that it has been urged upon me that the Government should have taken this opportunity of making, as the Secondary Education Commission recommended, the "beer" money applicable to secondary education generally. We have not seen our way to do that in this Bill, but, so far as it goes, this section is, I take it, an extension of the purposes to which "beer" money may be devoted. However, I will make that quite clear.

Amendment proposed—

"Page 2, line 23, insert 'Provided that no distinction between schools in respect of such payment or contribution be made on account of the character or, in boarding schools or boarding houses, the conditions of the religious instruction given therein.'—(*The Archbishop of Canterbury.*)"

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: County and borough councils can at present assist secondary schools in various ways, and I know one county council that has proposed to inspect certain secondary schools, but has been stopped by the Local Government Board on the ground that those particular schools have no Conscience Clause.

Lord President of the Council.

Now, I have no objection whatever to a Conscience Clause in day schools; I think it is quite reasonable and not at all difficult to work; but I am quite sure that a great many schools which are intended to include religious instruction would be very seriously hampered in imparting that instruction if they were compelled to submit to a Conscience Clause being imposed upon them. I think it would be a very great hardship if such secondary schools were debarred from receiving the same assistance in the way of inspection which is to be given to other secondary schools, simply because they wanted to have their religious instruction thoroughly effective. There is a very good reason why the Conscience Clause should be applied to the day schools, but when it comes to a boarding school the case is altered. It is not a very real hardship to parents if they do not like one boarding school to send them to another. It is very easy to organise the religious instruction in a day school with a Conscience Clause, but it is not at all easy to do so in a boarding school. I do not mean that it is impossible in the case of very big boarding schools, such as Rugby or Harrow, where it is always easy to find one or two masters who are not keeping boarding houses, but who are quite willing to take two or three boys under conditions which the parents may wish. But with the great majority of boarding schools it would not be possible at all, and it is not reasonable to say that such schools must either damage their religious instruction or not have the benefit of the contribution towards inspection. Therefore I suggest that the words which I now move should be added.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: I am afraid it is impossible to accept the Amendment, which, in my opinion, goes a great deal beyond what the most reverend Prelate contemplates. This clause is of a purely permissive character. The county council or borough council may inspect certain schools if they like, may contribute towards the cost of inspection of certain schools if they like, and may decline to contribute towards the cost of certain schools. We have no power to compel a county council to pay or contribute towards the inspection of any schools,

and this Amendment would appear to insist upon the councils, if they contributed to the cost of inspection of any school, to contribute to the cost of inspection of all the schools within their district, whatever might be their denominational character. Either the proviso would have no effect at all, which I am rather inclined to think would be the result, or else it would have the effect of compelling the county council, instead of contributing towards the cost of any school, to contribute towards the cost of all, and that is quite impossible.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: I do not think the Amendment would have the effect suggested. I do not believe it would compel the county councils to contribute to all schools if they contributed to one, but would only provide that the denominational question should not be raised. I do not think the councils ought to have the power of introducing into their system of inspection of schools something which will be distinctly unjust to one class of schools as compared with another. I do not think the religious difficulty really occurs in any of these schools. In the secondary education of the country generally there is no serious difficulty about the religious instruction, but to enforce the Conscience Clause upon all sorts of schools by refusing to admit denominational schools to inspection introduces the religious difficulty at once, and I think it would be very much better that the religious difficulty should be altogether kept out, and I know of no other way to keep it out than to say that the county councils should not pay any attention to the religious instruction given when they are dealing with these schools. I shall not say a word against their adopting any scheme which in their judgment they think suitable, but I do not think they ought to have the power of damaging certain schools. When the competition between schools is so keen as it is at present in the case of the smaller secondary schools this becomes a serious matter.

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: The Education Instruction Act provides for a Conscience Clause, and if the councils are required to carry out the conditions

of that Act they would be bound, I think, to require a Conscience Clause.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: Under the clause as it stands, we shall not know the reasons why the county councils undertake to contribute or decline to contribute to the cost of inspection. We shall only know that they propose to assist schools A B and C, and not schools D E and F. No provision such as is proposed would enable us to ascertain for what reasons the councils decline to contribute towards the cost of inspection.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: I do not think it is necessary that the reason should be known to the Education Board. If the county councils are told that they are not to make any distinction between schools on account of the character or, in boarding schools or boarding houses, the conditions of the religious education given, the difficulty will be got over. Some of the denominational schools are exceedingly good schools, and it will not help the cause of education to fine them, as it were, because they are giving the religious instruction which belongs to their particular body.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: It really almost drives one to despair that this question of inspection should forthwith raise a religious difficulty. It is possible, I believe, to import that most thorny matter into every possible subject connected with education. For my part, I wish people thought a little more of education and a little less of the religious difficulty. Such a provision as the one proposed would, in point of fact, have no real effect at all. The county councils would act in the way they considered best. In my opinion, what they ought to do is to spend their money in such a way as to encourage education generally in the whole district, and I should be very sorry indeed to see that they were unwilling to recognise thoroughly efficient schools because of the religious instruction given. I deprecate the introduction of this question, and I hope the noble Duke will allow the clause to stand as it is.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: I will undertake to look into

the point raised by the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Ripon) and ascertain whether there is anything in the Technical Education Act which would prevent county councils contributing to the inspection of schools which had not a Conscience Clause.

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: Owing to financial considerations and the want of sufficient money to contribute to all the schools, the councils must necessarily pick and choose between the schools in the district whatever provision you may put in the Act of Parliament.

Question put.

Amendment negatived without a Division.

Question put—

"That Clause 3, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Motion agreed to.

CLAUSE 4.

Amendments proposed—

"Page 2, line 25, leave out 'as to' and insert 'of not less than 12 or more than 24 persons, of whom.'"

"Page 2, line 26, leave out 'of' and insert 'shall be,' and after 'and' insert 'other.'"—
(*The Bishop of Winchester.*)

THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER said he had put these two Amendments on the Paper mainly with the view of obtaining some information as to the character and responsibilities of this Consultative Committee. On the Second Reading he was unable to obtain the information, but he ventured to hope that before they were asked to pass this clause they would have more information as to this vague and shadowy body. At present there was nothing to indicate whether the numbers of the Committee would be five, or 100, or 500, whether its powers would be large or small. He agreed that the process of election, and the tenure of office of the members were questions which could wait, but he thought the House should know how many members the Committee would consist of, how it would be constituted, and how far the advice tendered was to be of a private and confidential character.

Lord President of the Council.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: The right reverend Prelate has inquired what would be the probable size of the Consultative Committee which it is proposed to constitute. I should say that the Committee would consist of about the number of members indicated in the right reverend Prelate's Amendment—namely, not less than 12, or more than 24. It has been left entirely within the discretion of the Board of Education or the Minister of Education to decide what the size of the Council shall be, but the number, of course, can be altered from time to time by an Order in Council. I should very much object to putting words into the Bill which would fix any exact number.

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: I would suggest whether it would not be advisable to appoint the members of the Consultative Committee for a limited time only. If their tenure is indefinite, they may get out of touch with educational feelings and wants, and become a sort of educational oligarchy.

Question put.

Amendment negatived.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: Clause 4 provides that the Consultative Committee shall exist, as to not less than two-thirds, of persons representing universities "and bodies interested in education." As the right reverend Prelate (the Bishop of Winchester) pointed out on the Second Reading, this is an insinuation that the universities are not interested in education, and I propose to alter the clause so that it will read "persons representing universities and other bodies interested in education."

Amendment proposed—

"Page 2, line 26, leave out from 'representing' to 'for' in line 27, and insert 'bodies interested in secondary education, and bodies interested respectively in elementary education, in rate-supported, and in Voluntary schools.'"
(*Lord Colchester.*)

LORD COLCHESTER contended that Voluntary schools and rate-supported schools should both have their representatives on the Consultative Committee, and denied that this would lead to unnecessary friction.

EARL SPENCER: Before the noble Duke the Lord President of the Council replies, I should like to say that I strongly object to the Amendment. I consider that the words "and other bodies interested in education" cover the whole ground.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: The Amendment which the noble Lord has moved goes in the direction of defining by Act of Parliament the composition of this Committee, which I do not consider expedient. If you attempt to insert any more definite provisions in the Bill as to the composition of this Committee, it is quite certain that in another place, if not here, we shall have pages of Amendments on behalf of bodies who wish to secure for themselves direct representation on this Committee. The only way of escaping this difficulty is to leave the Board of Education and the Minister of Education responsible for the composition of the Committee.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn

Amendment proposed—

"After line 31 insert '(2) the advice so given by the consultative committee shall be recorded.'"—(*The Bishop of Winchester.*)

THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, in moving this Amendment, urged that it was desirable that the advice given by the Consultative Committee should be recorded, as it would be out of the question, even if the advice given was confidential, that it should remain so.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I do not know what view the noble Duke may take on this point, but I am strongly of opinion that such a provision should not be inserted in the Bill. I believe the effect of it would be disastrous. If we give the Consultative Committee this sort of power of recording their opinions, I shall have doubts as to the wisdom altogether of setting up the Committee. It would be entirely contrary to the object of the Bill as I read it, and I feel quite sure it would produce a state of discord in cases where there happened to be great differences of opinion.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: For some purposes, no doubt, the Consultative Committee will be part of the organization of the Department, and Minutes will undoubtedly have to be kept of its proceedings for those purposes, but I should very much deprecate the giving of the power proposed. I should object to the advice, any more than any other part of the Departmental proceedings, being published. It would be fatal to the utility of the Consultative Committee.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn

Amendment proposed—

"Leave out clause 4, and insert 'it shall be lawful for the Secretary for Education to consult such persons experienced in matters of education as he may think advisable, with such remuneration as the Treasury may determine.'"—(*Lord Norton.*)

***LORD NORTON** said there was great danger of the Consultative Committee overruling the Minister, and of taking away the responsibility of the Minister to Parliament. It was the suggestion to the Commission on whose Report this Bill is founded, by various associations of teachers and headmasters. In his opinion, the associations of teachers were already exercising too great a power in their own special views and interests over the Education Department. He quite agreed that the Minister for Education should receive the advice of experts, but if the permanent Consultative Committee were to rule the actions and share the responsibility of the Minister, it would be a very serious matter. The Consultative Committee were proposed to have power to frame regulations for the register of teachers. This would be entirely in the hands of the Committee, would be discussed in Parliament as their regulations, and would in so important a point relieve the head of the Department altogether of responsibility. He thought the object desired could be obtained if the President of the Board of Education was allowed by the Act to consult authoritatively such persons experienced in matters of education as he might think desirable, in the same way as the President of the Board of Trade by the Conciliation Act consulted experts to settle trade disputes. This would be much better than having a

gigantic, powerful, and permanent body by the side of the Education Minister which might overrule his decisions and would certainly relieve him of responsibility to Parliament.

EARL SPENCER: Before the noble Duke replies, I should like to say that I cannot go the length of Lord Norton in desiring altogether to throw out the proposal for the Consultative Committee. I am quite aware that there are considerable arguments in favour of what he has said. I should strongly deprecate anything being done which would materially affect the responsibility or decrease the responsibility of the Minister for Education, but I do not think the proposal in the Bill is open to that objection. The Lord President now has power to call experts to give him technical advice on any subject, but it would be impossible to remain in that position. There is a strong opinion existing among some of the leading educational bodies that a permanent Consultative Committee is necessary, and, therefore, I think the creation of a Consultative Committee is almost indispensable. At the same time, I am not quite satisfied with the form in which the noble Duke has put it, and I should like him to consider whether, in some way, a better form could not be adopted. I entirely agree that the inspection of schools and the framing of rules for the register of teachers are questions which should have reference to the Consultative Committee. I rather object to the permissive character of the second sub-section of the clause, as, though it does not leave the Consultative Committee equal powers with the Minister for Education, I think it might lead in present form to considerable difficulty. I do not see why the second sub-section should not be omitted. I am strongly of opinion that no Minister for Education would deal with any big subject without having reference to those in touch with education. He could always do that without it being suggested in this Bill that he should do so, and I think the very fact of the presence of this sub-section would lead to difficulties, as the Committee would resent any action on the part of the Minister unless they had been consulted.

Lord Norton.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: I understand that my noble Friend (Earl Spencer) would like to see the omission of the latter portion of the sub-section, "advising the Board of Education on any matter referred to the Committee by the Board," but I do not understand that my noble Friend would wish to limit the functions of the Consultative Committee to "framing, with the approval of the Board of Education, regulations for the formation of a register of teachers." Therefore, it would be necessary for my noble Friend, if he omits the latter part of the sub-section, to frame a comprehensive list of subjects which the Consultative Committee would be consulted upon. [Earl SPENCER assented.] Well, perhaps my noble Friend will consider between now and the Report stage if he can draft a list. I am inclined to think it would be better to leave the responsibility with the Minister of deciding for himself as to what questions he will or will not consult the Committee upon. With regard to the observations of my noble Friend (Lord Norton), I would say that all the discussions which have taken place since the Bill was introduced last year have shown that those who are professionally interested in the subject of education attach the greatest importance to the constitution of this Committee. As I stated in a previous stage of the Bill, there is a strong desire on the part of the headmasters of most of the principal Secondary schools, because of the advantages they consider it would be to secondary education generally, to come into relationship with, and under the inspection of, the Education Department. That desire was universally made conditional upon the constitution of such a Consultative Committee as we propose. There was also felt some apprehension that if they came under the control of the Department, without such a Consultative Committee being added, some attempt might be made to impose upon them a uniformity of system such as prevails in some foreign countries, which they strongly resented. The formation of such a Committee as this, which would necessarily be consultative upon such matters as the inspection of Secondary schools, seems to be an indispensable guarantee for the maintenance of their independence, and without this security the schools would not

associate themselves with a Government Department. I think it would be extremely undesirable if, at the moment of constituting a new Board of Education, we were to omit such a provision, to which so much importance is attached by those who have any right to speak for a very large portion of the teaching profession.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn

Question put—

"That clause 4 stand part of the Bill."

Motion agreed to.

On clause 5, Amendment proposed—

"Page 2, line 35, after 'council,' insert 'nothing in this Act shall take away any powers of either House of Parliament with reference to schemes framed under the Endowed Schools Acts, 1869, and amending Acts.'"—(*Lord Colchester.*)

LORD COLCHESTER said he moved this Amendment in order to get an explanation from the noble Duke as to what the effect of the clause would be, and whether it was intended that schemes made under the Endowed Schools Act would be Orders under this Bill.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: The Orders to which this clause refers are the Orders mentioned in the Bill in clause 2; that is to say, the Order as to the transfer of the powers of the Charity Commissioners to the Board, and the order for the transfer to the Consultative Committee. These are the Orders to which the clause refers, and it provides that they shall be laid before Parliament for not less than four weeks during which that House is sitting before it is submitted to Her Majesty in Council. The Bill does not make any alteration in the procedure for making schemes by the Charity Commissioners or the Endowed Schools Commissioners, except that it places for certain purposes the Education Department in the place of the Charity Commissioners, but the schemes to which the noble Lord has referred will have to be submitted to Parliament in exactly the same way as they are at present.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn

Amendment proposed—

Page 2, line 35, after 'council,' insert 'and shall not be so submitted if either House address Her Majesty against it.'—(*The Archbishop of Canterbury.*)

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Amendment provides that the draft of any Order made under the Act shall not be submitted if either House addresses Her Majesty against it. I think that such an Order in Council as might be made under the clause is one which ought to be under the control of either House of Parliament, so that, before being finally ratified, it should be open to either House to discuss the exact form which it should take.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL: This clause has been inserted into the Bill for the precise object which the most reverend Prelate appears to have in view. The clause has been inserted so that both Houses of Parliament may have the opportunity of discussion in regard to the Orders, but what the most reverend Prelate proposes is, that either House shall be able to exercise an absolute veto upon an administrative act of the Government, and to that I am utterly unable to agree.

Question put.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question put—

"That clause 5 stand part of the Bill."

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 6, 7, 8, and 9, agreed to.

Bill reported, with Amendments, to the House, and recommitted to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended.

BILLS ADVANCED.

TROUT FISHING ANNUAL CLOSE TIME SCOTLAND BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Standing Committee without Amendment, and to be read the third time on Thursday next.

**NATIONAL MONUMENTS IN CHURCHES
BILL [H.L.]**

Reported from the Standing Committee without Amendment, and to be read the third time on Thursday next.

SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

To be read the second time on Thursday next.—(*The Earl of Lauderdale.*)

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL
ORDERS (No. 1) BILL.**

To be read the second time on Friday next.—(*The Lord Harris.*)

**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION
ABERAVON, ETC.) BILL [H.L.]**

House in Committee (according to Order): Bill reported without amendment: Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read a third time on Thursday next.

**METROPOLITAN POLICE PROVISIONAL
ORDER BILL [H.L.]**

Read the second time (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the whole House on Thursday next.

**BROUGHTY FERRY GAS AND PAVING
ORDER BILL [H.L.]**

Read the third time (according to order), and passed and sent to the Commons.

FARNLEY TYAS MARRIAGES BILL.

Read the first time; and to be printed. (No. 77.)

**ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL
ORDERS (No. 1) BILL**

Read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 78.)

PILOTAGE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Read the first time; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 79.)

House adjourned at Seven
of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 2nd May 1899.

MR. SPEAKER took the Chair at Three of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, namely—

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow.

PRIVATE BILLS (LORDS) (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, namely—

Greenock and Port Glasgow Tramways Bill [H.L.]

Norfolk Estuary Bill [H.L.]

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS [H.L.] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, namely—

Owen's College, Manchester, Bill [H.L.]

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

ABERDEEN HARBOUR BILL [H.L.]

Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

GREAT NORTHERN AND STRAND RAILWAY BILL (QUEEN'S CONSENT SIGNIFIED).

Read the third time, and passed.

LONDON, BRIGHTON, AND SOUTH COAST RAILWAY (PENSIONS) BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

SHOTLEY BRIDGE AND CONSETT DISTRICT GAS BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

LOUGHBOROUGH AND SHEEPSED RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

ST. ANDREW'S BURGH PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL [H.L.]

Read a second time, and committed.

WEST METROPOLITAN RAILWAY.

Petition for additional Provision referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP B).

Sir John Brunner reported from the Committee on Group B of Private Bills, That the parties promoting the Leicester Corporation Water Bill had stated that the evidence of Samuel Wood, Chartered Accountant, of 30, Gracechurch Street, E.C., was essential to their case; and it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Samuel Wood do attend the said Committee To-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Ordered, That Samuel Wood do attend the Committee on Group B of Private Bills To-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP D).

Sir Joseph Pease reported from the Committee on Group D of Private Bills, That the parties promoting the Milton Creek Conservancy Bill had stated that the evidence of Edward Hartridge, Chairman of the Milton Urban District Council, was essential in the case; and it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Edward Hartridge do attend the said Committee To-morrow, at Twelve of the clock, and do produce Minute Books and Correspondence with Local Government Board, Faversham Port Sanitary Authority, Kent County Council, and the Sittingbourne Urban District Council from 1894 to the present time, so far as the same relate to the Creek.

Ordered, That Edward Hartridge do attend the Committee on Group D of Private Bills To-morrow, at Twelve of the clock, and do produce the said Papers.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F).

Mr. Hargreaves Brown reported from the Committee on Group F of Private Bills, That, to meet the convenience of the parties, they had adjourned till Thursday, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP 7).

Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth reported from the Committee on Group 7 of Railway and Canal Bills; That, there being no business before the Committee, they had adjourned till Friday, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

FINE OR IMPRISONMENT (SCOTLAND AND IRELAND) (RE-COMMITTED) BILL.

Committee deferred from To-morrow till Wednesday 10th May.

MID-KENT GAS BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for enabling Bodies Corporate to hold property in Joint Tenancy." [Bodies Corporate (Joint Tenancy) Bill [H.L.]]

Also a Bill, intituled, "An Act to Amend the Lunacy Acts." Lunacy Bill [H.L.]

And, also a Bill, intituled, "An Act for incorporating and conferring powers upon the Mid-Kent Gas Light and Coke Company." Mid-Kent Gas Bill [H.L.]

PETITIONS.

BOROUGH FUNDS ACT, 1872.

Petitions for alteration of Law:—From Selby; Peterborough; Tottenham; and, Millom; to lie upon the Table.

BUILDING FEUS AND LEASES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Dunfermline, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCHOOL ATTENDANCE) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Dumfries, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EXECUTORS (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Dunfermline, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROCERS' LICENCES (SCOTLAND) ABOLITION BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Whiteinch; and, Glasgow (two); to lie upon the Table.

GROUND RENTS (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Petitions in favour;—From Rawtenstall; Brighouse; Fleetwood; Barnoldswick; Bedlington; Ramsbottom; Batley; Knottingley; Millom; and, Central Conference Association of Co-operative Societies; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND VALUES (TAXATION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Dunfermline, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

HARROW WEALD COMMON SCHEME.

Petitions against confirmation;—From Pinner; and, Arthur Toovey; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Macduff; Dalkeith (five); Baillieston (two); Leven (two); Downfield; Stirling (two); Perth (two); Parkhead (two); Elgin; Glasgow (three); Govan; Darvel; Selkirk; Chryston; Dreghorn; Stonehaven (two); Bo'ness (two); Reston; Colinton; Stepps; Dumfries (two); Sanguhar; Aberdeen; Blairgowrie; North Berwick; Glengowan; Partick; Shiprow; Rosehearty (two); Motherwell; Kirkfieldbank; Whiteinch; Gullane; North Kelvinside; Walkerburn; Berwick-on-Tweed; Tweedmouth; Dundee (two); Kilmarnock; Scoon; Dumbarton; and, Inverkip; to lie upon the Table.

LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL

Petitions for alteration; From St. Olave and St. Thomas, Southwark; and, Mile End Old Town; to lie upon the Table.

MERCANTILE MARINE (EMPLOYMENT OF ALIENS IN BRITISH VESSELS).

Petition from Durham and other places, for restrictive legislation; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Walkden; Allerton Silkstone; Tyldesley; Mirfield; Abram; Woolley; South Kirkby; Monk Bretton; Hightown; Wharfedale Silkstone; Park Hall; Longton; Sandford Hill; Berry Hill; Fenton; Fenton Lodge; Glebe; Whitfield; Golden Hill; Talk o' th' Hill; Kidsgrove (three); Mow Cop; Brown Edge; Audley; Jamage; Pittshill; Halmer End; Bunkers Hill; HARRISEAHEAD; Madeley; Leycester; Moss Pits; Lawton; Ubbesley; Loanhead; Rosewell; Niddrie; Newbattle; Wallyford; Polton; Carberry; and, Arncliffe Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

PARISH COUNCILLORS (TENURE OF OFFICE) BILL.

Petition from Northop, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Govan, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour;—From Dumfries; and, Dumfries and Galloway; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Dumfries; Broughty Ferry; and, Edinburgh; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Norwich; Sheffield; and, Beverley, to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS TO CHILDREN.

Petition from Chelmsford, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table.

SUCCESSION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Dunfermline, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

TELEGRAPHS (TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION, Etc.) BILL.

Petition of the Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

TEMPERANCE REFORM (THREEFOLD OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Glasgow;—Longforgan;—Alexandria;—Dunlop;—New Craighall;—St. Bernard's;—Edinburgh;—Glasgow;—Glasgow;—Inchinnan;—St. Madoes;—and, Stanley; to lie upon the Table.

TOWN COUNCILS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Dunfermline, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.**EAST INDIA (SUGAR IMPORTATION AND CULTIVATION).**

Return [presented 1st May] to be printed. [No. 181.]

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copy presented,—of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2238 and 2239 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PACIFIC CABLE (CANADA-AUSTRALIA).

Copy presented,—of correspondence relating to the proposed construction of a Cable across the Pacific Ocean [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Committee:—

1. "That, in the case of the London, Walthamstow, and Epping Forest Railway (No. 2) Petition, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

2. "That, in the case of the Millwall Dock Petition, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

Resolutions agreed to.

LONDON, WALTHAMSTOW, AND EPPING FOREST RAILWAY (No. 2).

Report [this day] from the Select Committee on Standing Orders read.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Wanklyn and Mr. Lafone.

MILLWALL DOCK.

Report [this day] from the Select Committee on Standing Orders read.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Sydney Buxton and Mr. Lionel Holland.

HIGHLAND WATER POWER BILL.

Reported [Preamble not proved]; Report to lie upon the Table.

FISHGUARD AND ROSSLARE RAILWAYS AND HARBOURS BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

SELECTIONS (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Mr. Halsey reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Law and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure: Mr. Cochrane, Mr. Renshaw, and Mr. T. W. Russell; and had appointed in substitution: Sir George Fardell, Mr. Loder, and Mr. Warr.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS (ENGLAND AND IRELAND) BILL.

"To provide for Seats being supplied for the use of Shop Assistants in England and Ireland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. (Bill 169.)

RAILWAY WRECKING BILL.

"To enable the Courts, before which a prisoner is convicted of Railway Wreckage, to order such prisoner to be flogged," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 17th May, and to be printed. (Bill 170.)

QUESTIONS.

IRON GATES OF THE DANUBE.

LORD E. FITZMAURICE (Wilts, Cricklade): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can inform the House how far the works contemplated by Article 57 of the Treaty of Berlin for the removal of the obstacles which the Iron Gates of the Danube place in the way of navigation are now complete; and if the Foreign Office have any report from our Consuls that the charges proposed to be raised by the Austro-Hungarian Government from 1st May on the navigation coming

up stream are prohibitory; and whether the charges in question purport to be the provisional tax to cover the cost of the works, which the Austro-Hungarian Government is enabled to levy by Article VI. of the Treaty of London, 1871, and Article 57 of the Treaty of Berlin, as a temporary exception to the provisions of Article XV. of the Treaty of Paris, 1856, which declared that there should not be any toll levied solely on the part of the navigation of the river, nor any duty on the goods which may be found on board of vessels; and, if any communications have been received from foreign Powers on the subject?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. ST. JOHN BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford):

A communication has been received from the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at this Court, in which it is stated that the works for regulating the rapids at the Iron Gates on the Danube, which were entrusted to Austria-Hungary under the Treaty of Berlin, were completed in the autumn of last year and opened for navigation. A draft tariff of dues, which the Austro-Hungarian Government proposes to levy in accordance with Article VI. of the Treaty of London of 13th March 1871, was submitted with this communication for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government. These proposals have been submitted to careful examination with a view to their bearing upon treaty stipulations and upon the interests of British shipping, and it is not found that they violate any treaty rights. A dispatch has been received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Budapesth reporting a discussion which took place on 10th April in the Vienna Chamber of Commerce, when criticisms were passed on the proposed tariff; and it is understood that the date of imposition of the new dues has been postponed by the Hungarian Government. These dues are only of temporary application pending repayment of the cost of the works.

CHINA.

Mr. J. WALTON (York, W.R., Barnsley): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have sought and obtained from the Yamen an assurance in writing, similar to that given to France, as to the non-alienation, ceding, or leasing by the Chinese Government of any territory in the province of Kwang-si to another Power?

Mr. BRODRICK: No such demand has been made upon the Chinese Government. The province of Kwang-si does not affect British interests in the same way as the provinces of Yun-nan and Kwang-tun, in regard to which assurances as to non-alienation were asked for and given.

Mr. J. WALTON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have received from the Yamen the assurance in writing, demanded on the 25th of April 1898, that the Chinese Government have not yielded to France any exclusive privileges with respect to railways or mining in the two provinces of Kwang-tung and Yun-nan, and that no territory in the said provinces shall be alienated to any Foreign Power; and, if so, will he communicate the same to the House?

Mr. BRODRICK: The honourable Member will see from the Blue Book China, No. 1, 1899, page 71, that on 3rd May 1898 Her Majesty's Minister reported that the Yamen undertook to grant the demands referred to, and these assurances are held to be binding on the Chinese Government.

Mr. J. WALTON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the railway survey officers in Southern China report that they have discovered a good railway route for the extension of the Burma Railway from Kunlon Ferry to Chung-King on the Upper Yang-tsze; and whether the right, admitted by the Chinese Government, to extend the Burma Railway system into China as far as the Yang-tsze has been embodied in a duly ratified agreement authorising the construction of this railway on equally favourable terms

and conditions to those granted to France in Southern China?

MR. BRODRICK: As I informed the House on April 24, it is understood that what is considered a practicable route into Yun-nan has been found, which may perhaps be extended to the Upper Yang-tsze, but we have no particulars at present. The Answer to the second Question is in the negative. Assurances were given to Her Majesty's Minister by the Yamen with regard to the extension of the Burma Railway as soon as it reaches the frontier, and no written agreement on the subject was considered necessary.

NETLEY STREET BOARD SCHOOL.

MR. FLOWER (Bradford, W.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the Committee of Council have received from the Religious Education Union a complaint of the course pursued by the London School Board in instituting a canvass of the parents of the children attending Christ Church Schools, Marylebone, by the attendance officers of the Board, with the object of justifying an extension of the Board School in Netley Street; and whether such canvass having shown the satisfaction of the parents of the Christ Church school children, and in view of the fact that there are vacant school places in the immediate vicinity, the Committee of Council will withhold their sanction to the proposed enlargement of the Netley Street Board School?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (Sir J. GORST, Cambridge, University): The complaint has been received. The Board has been informed that, in sanctioning the enlargement of the site of the Netley Street School, my Lords have not sanctioned the provision of any additional school places.

SALE OF DIAMONDS BY THE POLICE.

MR. FLOWER (Bradford, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that 14 months ago a man named Timothy Murphy delivered to the police

authorities some diamonds which he had found in Ebury Street; whether the diamonds having remained unclaimed have since been sold; and why the finder has been refused any compensation?

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny) also had the following Question on the Paper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that Timothy Murphy, a cab-runner, found 14 diamonds more than a year ago, and delivered them up to the police; that the police have failed to find an owner for the property, sold it without giving any notice to Murphy, or any compensation for his honesty in the transaction; and that, when Murphy applied at Bow Street for the property, he was told he ought to have applied two months earlier; and whether, considering the poverty of the man who acted so honestly, he will see that the amount realised by the sale of the diamonds is given to Timothy Murphy?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir M. W. RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): It is not the case that Murphy delivered up the diamonds to the police; they were found on him when arrested on a charge of drunkenness. The magistrate directed the police to retain the diamonds, and Murphy was informed that he must apply to the magistrate if he wished to obtain possession of them. No application having been made, and no owner discovered, the police retained the diamonds for a year and then sold them under the provisions of the Police Property Act, 1897, and the regulations made thereunder. Afterwards an application was made to the magistrate, and refused by him. Under the circumstances I do not think there is any ground for compensation, although if the diamonds had been, as suggested in the Question, voluntarily delivered up to the police by Murphy he would, according to the ordinary practice, either have received them back, if no owner had been discovered, or have been compensated.

**THE EMPLOYMENT OF SCHOOL
CHILDREN IN SCOTLAND.**

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he will grant for Scotland a Return referring to the employment of school children, similar to that granted by the English Education Department (Part II. of which is already issued)?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: I am not prepared to admit that a precedent can always be drawn for Scotland from the case of England, and the Department have grave doubts whether a Return, such as that indicated in the honourable Member's Question, could be made either so complete or so accurate as to be of any practical use proportionate to the trouble which it would involve. In any case the Department proposes to wait for the issue of the first part of the English Return, which is promised shortly.

**THE TRANSIT OF PERISHABLE GOODS
BY RAILWAY COMPANIES.**

MR. ARTHUR MOORE (London-derry): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether his attention has been drawn to the frequent complaints from butter merchants and others of the damage done to their wares owing to the neglect of the railway companies in providing suitable accommodation for such perishable goods in transit, carelessness at the points of interchange of traffic in the handling of butter, and delays in delivery; whether he is aware of the steps taken by Foreign Governments to ensure regularity in delivery and proper treatment

in transit; and whether there are at his disposal any means to remedy the grievances complained of?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): My right honourable Friend, the President of the Board of Agriculture, has asked me to reply to this Question. The Board of Trade have not been made aware of the complaints to which the honourable Member refers, but if specific cases are submitted to the Department the Board will be happy to communicate with the railway companies interested and use their good offices to insure the supply of suitable accommodation for perishable goods.

**PROSECUTIONS UNDER THE
MARGARINE ACT.**

MR. ARTHUR MOORE (London-derry): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he can give a Return of all prosecutions by county and borough authorities for infractions of the Margarine Act, 1867, showing the number of cases tried, and the number of convictions obtained?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE: I have been in communication with the Home Office on this subject, and I am informed that no information is available on the matters to which the honourable Member refers, and that it could only be obtained by means of a special and very laborious inquiry. In these circumstances, and as we are proposing very material changes

in the law relating to the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts, the honourable Member will probably not think it necessary to press for a Return.

TEMPORARY CLERICAL ASSISTANTS IN THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE.

COLONEL DALBIAC (Camberwell, N.):

I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade how many temporary clerical assistants are employed in the Labour Department of the Board of Trade; and whether the Deputy Controller has informed them that they are eligible for promotion to the establishment under the Order in Council of 29th November 1898; whether there are in the Department several abstractors or assistant clerks who were appointed long before these temporary clerical assistants, and who have had considerable experience in the Department; and whether it is proposed to promote these temporary assistant clerks, who have passed no examination, to vacancies in the Established Civil Service, in preference to men who have longer service and greater experience?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: There are at present 16 temporary clerks employed in the Labour Department of the Board of Trade not including officers appointed for special expert qualifications, and it is proposed to place some of these clerks on the permanent establishment. Abstractors and assistant clerks are already in the Established Civil Service, and their scale

of salary is identical with that which will be received by such of the temporary clerks as may be accepted for established positions by the Civil Service Commissioners. No such statement as that referred to in the Question has been made by the Deputy Controller, nor does it correctly represent the facts.

RAILWAY COLLISION AT INNISKEEN.

MR. MADDISON (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the Report of Colonel Addison on the accident at Inniskeen, on the Great Northern Railway, in which it was stated that the driver and fireman of the cattle train had been on duty 17½ hours at the time when the mishap occurred; and whether he will take the necessary steps to prevent this extent of overwork by putting into operation the Railway Regulation Act, 1893?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Yes, Sir, the Board of Trade are already taking the preliminary steps under the Act.

RAILWAY SHUNTING ACCIDENTS.

MR. TENNANT (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he would be willing to grant a Return of the accidents due to shunting on railways, distinguishing between fatal and non-fatal?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: The honourable Member will find the figures he requires in the General Report on Railway Accidents. They are given at page 20 of the Report of 1898—C. 8990. I hardly think any special "Return" is necessary.

IRISH RAILWAY RATES AND CHARGES.

MR. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade has his attention been drawn to a resolution passed unanimously by the Monaghan County Council, at the meeting of that board on the 22nd ultimo, urging the Government to appoint a Commission to inquire into the excessive charges on freights made by the Irish Railway Companies, and to provide a remedy; and can he hold out the hope that a Commission for the purpose will be appointed?

MR. DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg also to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that much dissatisfaction prevails in Ireland owing to the high railway rates prevailing there; and whether he will advise the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the rates and charges made upon Irish railways?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I will answer the Questions of the honourable Members for North and South Monaghan together. The whole subject of the powers of railway companies in regard to rates and charges

was examined by a Commission and by a Joint Committee as recently as 1892, and I am unable to recommend the appointment of a Royal Commission to reopen the subject.

THE PRISONS ACT, 1898.

MR. NUSSEY (Pontrera): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, by section 9 of the Prisons Act, 1898, as to the release of a prisoner on payment of a portion of a fine, and the rules made thereunder, any provision is made, similar to that contained in section 21, sub-section (4) of the Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879, in respect to payments prior to committal, that the term of imprisonment for non-payment of an unsatisfied balance shall not exceed the maximum term of imprisonment to which the prisoner might have been subjected if the unsatisfied balance had constituted the original amount adjudged to be paid by the conviction, e.g., if the defendant, ordered to pay a fine of £5 and 5s. for costs, or in default two months' imprisonment, pay to the Governor of the prison 5s., will the term of imprisonment be reduced by three days or by one month; and whether the provisions of section 9 extend to the case of a person imprisoned for non-payment of any sum adjudged to be paid by an order (as distinguished from a conviction) either when the sum is a civil debt or otherwise, and whether the sum adjudged be for penalties under section 34 of the Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879, or otherwise for costs only?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: The answer to both paragraphs is in the negative. Reduction of imprisonment is earned by payment after committal of a proportionate part of the sum for which the prisoner stands committed, whether or not the committal has been altered under the provisions of the Summary Jurisdiction Act referred to.

THE SUMMARY JURISDICTION
(MARRIED WOMEN) ACT, 1895.

MR. NUSSEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, under the Prisons Act, 1898, and the rules made thereunder, persons committed for non-payment of arrears due under orders in bastardy, or arrears made under the Summary Jurisdiction (Married Women) Act, 1895, are entitled to be treated as debtors and not placed in association with criminal prisoners; whether, under section 54 of the Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879, persons imprisoned for non-payment of such sums have not been hitherto treated as ordinary criminal prisoners, and compelled to wear the prison dress; and whether, if persons so imprisoned are not now entitled to be treated as debtors, the court may give directions as to the division in which they shall be placed under section 6, subsection (2), which relates only to persons convicted by any court of an offence, and sentenced to imprisonment without hard labour?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: The answer to the first two paragraphs is in the affirmative, and consequently no answer is required to the third.

THE LIMEHOUSE GUARDIANS AND
POOR LAW CHILDREN.

SIR H. BEMROSE (Derby): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been drawn to the vote of censure passed at a public meeting of ratepayers, held in Limehouse Town Hall on the decision of the Stepney Guardians to build blocks containing 60 beds each for the children chargeable to that union, instead of dealing with them by the cheaper methods of boarding-out, emigration, and scattered homes; and whether he intends to support the action of the guardians, which is contrary to the recommendation of the Departmental Committee on Poor Law schools?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD: The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. With regard to the second part the guardians propose to provide the accommodation required partly by separate buildings, which are known as blocks, containing 60 children each, and partly by what are called cottage homes, containing 15 children each. The Local Government Board regard with approval the Cottage Homes system, and in view of the admirable results which have been obtained at the Girls' School at Banstead Road, Sutton, and elsewhere, by the block system, they have seen no reason to disapprove of the proposal of the guardians generally, and they have, therefore, approved of the purchase of the site. They are, however, awaiting the details of the scheme.

LOSS OF CATTLE IN THE ATLANTIC PASSAGE.

MR. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he can state what number of cattle lost in the Atlantic transit is due to losses in the North and the South Atlantic passages, respectively; whether, in late months, out of 227,515 head carried by the North Atlantic trade, only 261 were lost; and whether any Returns issued by his Department set out the losses sustained on the various routes of transit, respectively; and, if not, whether this information can be supplied in future Returns?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. W. H. LONG, Liverpool, West Derby): During the year 1898, 1,012 cattle were lost in transit from the United States and Canada out of a total shipment of 478,895, or 0.21 per cent., as compared with 5,271 out of a total shipment from Argentina of 94,640, or 5.57 per cent. I am not sure as to the period to which the figures cited by my honourable Friend relate, but the losses of cattle shipped from the United States and Canada during the first three months of the current year were 750, out of a total shipment of 78,594. A full statement and explanation of the losses sustained both in the North and South Atlantic trades is always given in the Annual Report of our Proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts.

THE NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS.

MR. ALLHUSEN (Salisbury): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the designs by Mr. Young and Mr. Brydon for the new Government buildings have been definitely approved by the Committee; and, if not, whether he will procure and place in the tea-room of the House a sketch of a design for the new War Office buildings, which has been adapted at the suggestion of Lord Wemyss from the existing designs by Inigo Jones for a Royal Palace in Whitehall?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): The designs of Mr. Young and Mr. Brydon were approved by Her Majesty's Government before they were submitted to the House. I have carefully considered the sketch elevation prepared at the suggestion of Lord Wemyss, and I regret that although externally attractive, as a design for a Royal Palace, it is unsuitable for Government offices. There would be no useful purpose served in placing this design in the tea-room, unless it is accompanied by a plan and sections showing the nature and arrangement of the accommodation it would provide.

MR. J. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): May I ask whether the plans will be placed in a prominent part of the House for the inspection of honourable Members?

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS: The plans were placed in the tea-room for the inspection and criticism of honourable Members. Certain alterations in matters of detail have been suggested, and these suggestions will be carefully considered. Generally the plans have been most favourably received, and I shall proceed with the work without any unnecessary delay.

OZONE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

SIR J. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the attention of his Department has been directed to the possibility of supplying ozone to the House of Commons when Members are not sitting; and whether, in view of the numerous cases of influenza amongst Members and officials during the present Session, he will consider the advisability of nightly disinfecting the House by the introduction of an element said to be fatal to insaniary microbes?

MR. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop Auckland): May I ask whether the right honourable Gentleman has considered the advisability of establishing a fumigating chamber for the use of such honourable Members as desire it?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS: I have caused the plant necessary for the manufacture and introduction of ozone to be inspected. The methods and practical merits of the process do not appear to me to be as yet sufficiently established. The cost of a complete installation at the Houses of Parliament would be some thousands of pounds, and the electrical pressure required for working it is no less than 12,000 volts.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask whether the right honourable Gentleman has considered the expediency of opening the windows to admit fresh air into the House before it assembles?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS: I shall be very happy to consider that. I believe the windows are opened. I have been down to the House several mornings to see whether this has been done, and I have found that the windows have been opened.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN SCOTLAND.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he will grant for Scotland a Return referring to the Employment of school children, similar to that granted by the English Education Department (Part II. of which is already issued).

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: I am not prepared to admit that a precedent can always be drawn for Scotland from the case of England, and the Department has grave doubts whether a Return, such as that indicated in the honourable Member's Question, could be made either so complete or so accurate as to be of any practical use proportionate to the trouble which it would involve. In any case, the Department proposes to wait for the issue of the first part of the English Return, which is promised shortly.

THE NEW STAMP DUTY.

MR. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the proposed new stamp duty on Colonial mining scrip will have to be

paid on the occasion of every transfer, or whether the payment of the duty in the first instance will be accepted as final?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said any instrument which comes within sub-clause 2 of clause 3 of the Finance Bill, when once stamped with the proposed new duty, will not require to be stamped a second time.

TRADING RELATIONS WITH THE COLONIES.

MR. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the Premiers of the Australian Colonies have repeatedly expressed their desire to enter into reciprocal trading relations with the mother country; and whether he can see his way to defer a final decision in the matter of subjecting Colonial imports to the operation of the proposed increased duties, having regard to the probability of a mutually satisfactory agreement being arrived at between the Imperial Government and the Governments of the Colonies concerned?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am aware that there have been from time to time some expressions of opinion by the Premiers of the Australian Colonies giving a general support to the idea of closer commercial relations with the mother country. The latest was the Resolution passed at the Conference in London in 1897, but no proposals for reciprocal trading relations have been made; and I am not aware of anything that would justify the statement made in the Question as to the probability of an agreement.

RECRUITING IN CANADA.

MR. ARNOLD FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the Official Report made to the Department of Militia and Defence of the Dominion of Canada by Major-General Hutton, commanding the Canadian Militia, and specially to the

passage therein relating to recruiting for the Imperial Service, in which he states that it has been proposed by the Imperial Government that recruiting for the Prince of Wales's (Leinster Regiment, Royal Canadians) shall be open to British subjects in the Dominion of Canada, and that complete arrangements for carrying this out have been prepared, and will be published as soon as the final instruction and the requisite official form have been received; and whether Major-General Hutton is correctly informed, and whether this statement was made by him with the knowledge or under the authority of the Colonial Office?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I have seen the statement in Major-General Hutton's Report referred to in the Question. A suggestion of the nature described in that statement had been the subject of discussion between Her Majesty's Government and the Canadian Government, and I presume that General Hutton made the statement in the belief that a decision had been arrived at, which was not the case.

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SIR CHARLES CAMERON (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the last number of the Parliamentary Debates delivered is that for 24th March; and whether the contract for the printing of the Debates contains any provision intended to insure prompt delivery?

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfar): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that at 8 p.m. yesterday, the 1st of May, the latest daily Hansard Report of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament available in the Library was that of the 24th of March, whereas paragraph 5 of the now current contract requires that on the seventh day the contractor shall publish his Report containing the speeches; and whether he will take such steps as may either amend the terms of the contract or require its fulfilment?

MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrews Burghs), replying for Mr. Hanbury (Preston) said: It is a fact that the last number of the Parliamentary Debates delivered is that for March 24. It is also a fact that paragraph 5 of the existing contract requires that on the seventh day the contractor shall publish his report containing the speeches. In the present instance the serious delay which has occurred is due to exceptional circumstances. Steps will be taken to ensure that the delay shall not recur in future.

BRITISH COMMERCE IN THE EAST.

MR. ASCROFT (Oldham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the suggestions made by Acting-Consul Massy, in his Diplomatic and Consular Report on the trade of Erzeroum, for the purpose of furthering British commerce in Asiatic Turkey and the Levant; and whether the recommendations in such Report, that British merchants should join in starting a reference agency in Constantinople for the compilation and distribution of suitable catalogues containing comparative weights, measures, and prices, the drafting of letters in the vernacular, the instruction of commercial travellers as to locality and requirements, the exhibition of patterns, and the collection of bad debts, has been, or will be, communicated to the Chambers of Commerce in the United Kingdom; and whether, in face of the fact that Acting-Consul Massy reports that such a course would result in a large accession of business being brought to this country, he will take the necessary steps to give publicity to same, and promise the assistance of the Government if such an agency is formed?

MR. BRODRICK: Acting-Consul Massy's Report has been sent to all the Chambers of Commerce in the United Kingdom, and to various other public institutions. It would be premature to promise Government assistance to the scheme suggested until it is seen whether British merchants and manufacturers are disposed to take any initiative in such a direction.

DUTIES ON CAPITAL.

Mr. ASCROFT (Oldham): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any special instructions have been given to the officials at Somerset House in respect to the new duties payable on the capital of limited liability companies, on registration, under the Finance Act, 1899; whether such duties are payable before that Act has received the Royal assent; whether any orders were issued to the officials at Somerset House in 1864 in respect to the duties payable under a similar Act of Parliament; and whether such orders are still in force or have been cancelled?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: A mistake occurred in this matter, for which, of course, I take the responsibility. But some days ago instructions were given to charge this new duty from the date at which the Finance Bill becomes law. With regard to the last two paragraphs, I do not know to what Act of Parliament the honourable Member may be referring; but, so far as I have been able to ascertain, no special instructions with regard to new stamp duties are known to have been issued in 1864.

THE COLLISION WITH A LIGHTSHIP.

Mr. ASCROFT (Oldham): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received any information respecting the collision between the steamship "R. F. Matthews" and the East Goodwin Light Vessel; and whether, seeing that the men on the latter owe their rescue to their being able to send a message through Marconi's wireless telegraph system with which the lightship was fitted, the advisability of supplying all lighthouses and light vessels with a similar apparatus is being considered by the Board of Trade?

Mr. RITCHIE (Croydon) said, I have not yet received an official report as to the collision between the steamship "R. F. Matthews" and the East Goodwin light vessel. As intimated in my reply to the honourable Baronet the Member for Cambridge on April 13, the possibility of adapting the wireless system of telegraphy to lighthouses and light-vessels is receiving careful consideration by the Board of Trade and other Departments interested.

NORTH SEA FISHERIES.

Mr. TENNANT (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is yet in a position to state what will be the scope and nature of the inquiry to be undertaken at the Conference of the North Sea Powers; and whether a representative of Great Britain has yet been decided upon?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am sorry to say I can make no statement on the subject, as negotiations are still proceeding upon it.

Mr. TENNANT: Can the right honourable Gentleman give any indication as to when he will be able to do so?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: It is always difficult to fix a term for negotiations between different Powers, but if the honourable Gentleman will put that Question on the Paper, I will endeavour to ascertain the views of the Foreign Office upon it.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

In answer to a Question by Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.),

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said he did not propose that there should be any long delay between the Second Reading and the Committee stage of the Finance Bill.

Mr. CLANCY: Will the Committee stage be taken before Whitsuntide?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Oh, yes, Sir. That is my hope and my expectation.

SCOTTISH SUPPLY.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will endeavour to take some other than Scottish Supply on Friday, seeing that several Reports dealing with that Estimate are not yet in the hands of Members?

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) had the following Question on the Paper on

the same subject: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he will arrange not to take the Scotch Votes until the Reports are in the hands of Members?

Mr. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.) also had the following Question on the Paper: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, as the Reports of the Committee of Council for Education in Scotland, of the Local Government Board for Scotland, and of the Fishery Board for Scotland are not yet issued, he will postpone Scotch Estimates till a later day than Friday the 5th?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said: As the House is aware, the illness of my right honourable Friend the Secretary to the Treasury rather limits my selection of Supply for Fridays. I put down the Scotch Estimates for next Friday as I thought that would be generally convenient, but as I gather that Scotch Members on the whole object to that course, I will not press it on the House.

PRIVILEGE (INTERFERENCE OF PEERS IN THE SELECTION OF A CANDIDATE FOR OXFORD UNIVERSITY).

Complaint made to the House by Mr. James Lowther, Member for the Thanet Division of Kent, of the interference of the Lord High Chancellor and other Lords of Parliament in the selection of a candidate to fill the vacancy in the representation of the University of Oxford:—

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That, it having been represented to this House that the Lord High Chancellor and other Lords of Parliament did infringe the liberties and privileges of this House by concerning themselves in the election of a Member to represent the University of Oxford in the Commons, a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into such alleged breach of Privilege.”—(*Mr. J. Lowther.*)

Mr. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said he rose to call the attention of the House to a question affecting its privileges and liberties as defined by the Sessional Order. That Order declared that it was a high infringement of the privileges and liberties of the Commons

of the United Kingdom for any Lord of Parliament or other Peer to concern himself in an election of a Member to serve in the House of Commons. He had had to trespass on the attention of the House on many occasions on this subject. The fault, however, was not his. The reply his right honourable Friend had given to the question he addressed to him confirmed the report which had reached the House through the ordinary channels of information. He might, therefore, take it that the report he read in “The Times” newspaper was correct. That report was to the effect that at a meeting of Unionist electors at Oxford University on Friday last, held at St. Stephen’s Club, the Lord Chancellor presiding, it was unanimously resolved on the motion of Sir Michael Hicks Beach, seconded by Mr. Goschen, that Sir W. Anson be invited to become the Unionist candidate for the vacancy in the representation of Oxford University, caused by the death of Sir John Mowbray. The vacancy actually existed at the time the meeting was held. His right honourable Friend just now made himself responsible for the proposition that the Sessional Order only applied when a writ had been actually moved.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: What I said was, that the Sessional Order was very commonly interpreted in the sense I have indicated.

Mr. J. LOWTHER said his right honourable Friend had gone a good deal farther than that, for he had said that the Order had been set at defiance year after year, and was of no binding effect whatever. His right honourable Friend was scarcely right, therefore, in saying that the limitation he sought to apply to the Order could be in any way established. On the contrary, he undertook to say that all the authorities on the subject showed that the Order was not pressed with the view of preventing Peers from delivering speeches at casual elections, but for the clear and deliberate purpose of preventing the interference of Peers with regard to the selection of candidates. He had no desire to attack the Lord Chancellor, whom he regarded as the only avowed Tory Protectionist in the Government, and therefore the very last Member of Her Majesty’s Ministry against whom he would, directly or in-

directly, say a solitary word; but dealing with the Lord Chancellor in the capacity he assumed on Friday, he must point out that there were special circumstances connected with the case which differentiated it wholly and entirely from all the others which had been brought before the House. He had previously called attention to cases in which Prime Ministers—Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Rosebery—and others, including the Duke of Devonshire, had one and all openly defied the Sessional Order. This was not a case in which the action of an obscure Peer was reported through the medium of an obscure provincial journal. They obtained their information from the leading organ of the country, and in a most prominent portion of the Paper they found that the Sessional Order was openly defied by no less a person than the Lord Chancellor. It was not merely the official position of the Lord Chancellor which merited attention. The Lord Chancellor was the highest living authority on the interpretation of the law. The meeting in question was not held in some obscure locality, but in a place which was practically within the precincts of the House itself. St. Stephen's Club was connected with the House by the Division bells, and was literally under the shadow of the Palace of Westminster, so that if that unwieldy structure the Clock Tower should take it into its head to fall it would smash St. Stephen's Club to atoms. He had no doubt, moreover, that some Members who would come in to vote against his Motion were at the club at that moment. He would not be in order if he moved that the Order should be expunged, but he would be in order in giving some authority for the view he held upon this question. Now, he knew that the House always delighted to hear his right honourable Friend the First Lord of the Treasury, and he would therefore venture to quote a few words from one of his speeches, which were always to the point and never unduly long. On 19th March 1894, when attention was called to the fact that the then Prime Minister had acted in a manner contrary to the Order, the present Leader of the House said—

"If we decide to-night that the action of Lord Rosebery in speaking at Edinburgh during the Leith election was not an action which comes within the fair meaning of the

Mr. J. Lowther.

Sessional Order, well and good. Let it henceforth be known that every Peer may do everything he likes, may speak where he likes, and when he likes, in regard to any election whatsoever, and that the Sessional Order which we still go through the form of passing at the beginning of each and every Session is not worth the paper upon which it is printed."

The right honourable Gentleman went on to say—

"This, I think, I ought to add. Lord Rosebery has now convinced us finally that the Sessional Order we pass every time we assemble must be acknowledged to be a farce. Many of us have long suspected it would not hold water; now the thing is conclusively demonstrated. I invite the right honourable Gentleman, as Leader of the House, to put a Motion on the Paper rescinding it, and if he does I shall consider that at all events he has acted a consistent and logical part."

Those words put the matter in a nutshell. In the speech he had just quoted the right honourable Gentleman was supporting the proposal that the question be referred to a Committee which had been made by another previous Leader of that House, Lord Randolph Churchill.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) said he had great pleasure in seconding the Motion of his right honourable Friend, with whom he had entered into a kind of holy alliance with the object of cleansing that House from cant, which, of course, was a very difficult thing to do. Their alliance was quite as close as that of the Duke of Devonshire and the Vice-President of the Council. They were fighting against shams; that was all they wished to do, as far as he was concerned. On the last occasion when they wished to have a Select Committee to inquire into a matter of a similar nature the right honourable Gentleman the Leader of the House opposed them. He said he would have nothing to do with a vain and frivolous inquiry. He was sure that after the right honourable Gentleman's support of the Old-Age Pensions Committee on the previous night he could never say that again. The right honourable Gentleman said that if they had a Committee and it was reported that there had been no breach of privilege, nothing would happen, but if the Committee reported that there had been a breach of privilege, the House had no power to enforce penalties. That reminded him very much of a judge in America, who

said, "Gentlemen of the jury, if you believe the evidence for the prosecution you will find the prisoner guilty; if you believe the evidence for the defence you will find him innocent; but if you believe neither I'll be hanged if I know what you ought to do." If the right honourable Gentleman the Leader of the House could not help them, then he did not think they could do better than appoint a Committee of men of light and leading, who might find some way to rescue the House from a pitiable and ridiculous position.

SIR W. HART-DYKE (Kent, Dartford) said he should like to say one or two words with regard to this question. In 1868, when he had the honour to be connected with the management of his Party in the House, he served under the banner of the late Colonel Taylor. Colonel Taylor had had 17 years' experience as a Party manager, and always impressed upon him that the true construction of the Sessional Order was that a breach of privilege could only take place where a Peer took part in an election after the writ had been moved for. In support of that view he (Colonel Taylor) quoted the practice of his predecessors. During the 12 years that he himself had to do with these matters he had always held the same opinion. For a vast number of years the rule he had mentioned had been observed, and it had been held that after the writ had been moved for no Peer could take part in an election. On this occasion his right honourable Friend had caught a very good fish. He had gone to the top of the tree to find it. Perhaps honourable Members would allow him to take refuge in a coral reef. He hoped some settlement of the matter would be come to without the tangled business of a Committee.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Whatever may be the merits of my right honourable Friend's suggestion, he deserves the utmost credit for the amazing perseverance which he shows in dealing with this not very important Parliamentary question. I believe my right honourable Friend would even go to the stake for the principles he advocates in connection with this Sessional Order. My right honourable Friend says it is contrary to the Standing

Orders that Peers should take part in the selection of candidates. The action of which he complains, however, is of almost immemorial antiquity. It lasted through the period of rotten boroughs, when Members of the Upper House not only took part in the selection of candidates, but took the sole part, settling who was to be, and practically doing everything that was done to secure his return. Well, Sir, the Lord Chancellor may or may not have transgressed the practice in the course he has taken—I shall come to that in a moment—but in any case he has done nothing compared with what used to be done by the owners of boroughs—Whig and Tory—in pre-Reform days, and if the House was content year after year to pass the Sessional Order to which my right honourable Friend so strongly objects, at all events we cannot feel that we are falling behind them in the strictness of the interpretation which we intend to give to that Order. Now, Sir, in my view this is a purely practical question. I have already stated to the House that if the Standing Order be transgressed we cannot impose it on Members of the Upper House. The question is whether an order, avowedly imperfectly sanctioned, has any useful effect or not, and I think the Order conveys a view which the Members of the Upper House, broadly speaking, pay attention to. My right honourable Friend denies it. Is it the fact that Members of the Upper House go with candidates on their platforms during contested elections? The nearest case which my right honourable Friend's untiring industry has been able to unearth is that of the speech made in Edinburgh by Lord Rosebery during the election for Leith.

*MR. E. MORTON (Devonport): The Duke of Devonshire at Darlington after the Writ had been moved.

MR. J. LOWTHER: Yes, with the candidate by his side.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Then I will withdraw what I said about Lord Rosebery. My right honourable Friend, then, has only two cases of active intervention by Peers in elections. Now, Sir, if we withdraw the Standing Order, it will, as I have already pointed out to the House, be taken as an

indication to the public at large, and to the other House, that we in this House regard the intervention of Peers in an electoral contest as natural, right, and proper, and generally, if not immediately, the result will be that every candidate in a constituency where a Peer has influence will beg him to attend all his meetings, and hold independent meetings of his own. If the House desires this it should abrogate the Standing Order; if it does not desire it the Standing Order should be retained. But if Members of the Upper House, in spite of this expression of their views, insist on taking part in elections, we have no choice but to acquiesce, for there are no sanctions we can apply and no punishments we can inflict. Looking at facts as they are, I say the Sessional Order has a great and a salutary effect on the conduct of peers in regard to Parliamentary elections, and I should be sorry to see the House depart from immemorial practice and abstain from passing the Order next Session. These are views which I have previously expressed to the House, and it appears to me that they have lost none of their force, and certainly our faith has not been shaken by the fact that, in relation to an election for Oxford University, some Peers have taken part in the selection of a candidate. I trust my right honourable Friend will not think it necessary to put the House to the trouble of a Division. Of course, I did not expect him to refrain from his Motion next year, for probably my right honourable Friend will think the Session not well opened without it.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I have never been able to support my right honourable Friend the Member for Thanet in his action in regard to this Sessional Order, for a very simple reason which I can state in one sentence to the House. It appears to me that the Order as it now stands, and as it is now carried out and obeyed, if it does no good certainly does no harm; while, on the other hand, if it be repealed, that repeal can do no good and may do great harm. Admitting all that the right honourable Gentleman has said as to individual instances in which Peers have, from his point of view, in regard to the Order infringed it by action prior to an election or on the outskirts of an election, yet still the Order has a

First Lord of the Treasury.

deterrent effect; but if the House deliberately takes action to repeal it, it will be taken as an invitation to Peers to henceforth concern themselves in elections. Peers, like other people, have their political opinions and the right to express them, but they have means of their own, and I do not think it a desirable thing, so long as the arrangement is part of the Constitution, that Peers should be deliberately invited to concern themselves in the election of Members to the House of Commons.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said his opinion was that the Sessional Order was a mere expression of the Common Law of Parliament, and as such might be taken into account if the point were raised in an election petition on an appropriate occasion. He suggested to his right honourable Friend that he should take his action into that sphere, presuming any Peer did—as he might and probably would if the Standing Order were abandoned—take an active part in an election of a Member.

MR. J. LOWTHER said he was quite ready to consult the wishes of the House, and it was a matter of perfect indifference to him what course might be taken in regard to the Motion. Obviously Peers could attend as many meetings as they chose, and he hoped they would do so. He was quite ready to withdraw the Motion, because his object had been gained—it was acknowledged on all hands that Peers in these matters could do exactly as they liked.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

FINANCE BILL.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [1st May]—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(Sir Henry Fowler.)

MR. COURTNEY resumed the Debate on the Second Reading of this Bill. Last night, he said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer defended the proposed alteration of the wine duties on the ground that it was the least interference possible with the course of trade. He demurred altogether to the opinion of the right honourable Gentleman. He said that wine was not produced in this country as beer and whisky were, and for that reason the tax on wine would cause the least interference with trade. That was a very imperfect and unsatisfactory view of what interference with trade really was. Interference with foreign trade must necessarily be an interference with domestic interests, and interference with the wine duties severely affected trade relations with foreign countries and our Colonies. The Government proposed to increase the wine duties by £480,000, or about 35 per cent. on existing duties, taking them all round. On cheap wines in bottle it was to be from 1s. to 3s. a dozen, and if that was intended to check the importation of wines in bottle it meant a disturbance of the natural course of trade by the fiscal action of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the defence of that policy by a protective argument. He next came to the action of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in dealing with the Sinking Fund. His right honourable Friend said last night that the arguments of his opponents pointed to the conclusion that under no circumstances and at no time should anything be done to interfere with the reduction of the Debt. It was not for him to defend or explain the language embodied in the Amendment of his right honourable Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, but he should have thought that it was a commonplace of Parliamentary action that all their propositions were relative to the time and the circumstances in which they were acting. If an honourable Member objected to any action proposed being taken by a Minister he was objecting in the circumstances of to-day; he thought that such action ought not to be taken, situated as they were, at the moment. It was impossible to lay down that at no time and under no circumstances should they limit, reduce, or abandon the policy of reducing the Debt. It must depend on the condition of affairs at home and our relations with other Powers, on the

policy we were engaged in, the national action we were pursuing, whether or not we should modify or abandon the policy of reducing the Debt. Now, his right honourable Friend had abandoned the point, which, after all, was very small; but at the close of his speech on the previous day his right honourable Friend brought forward a more serious argument in favour of his policy of reducing the amount of the Debt. He said—

“If I do not reduce the amount applicable for the Debt by £2,000,000 I shall have to impose taxation, to increase direct as well as indirect taxation;”

and then he turned round to honourable Members behind him and invoked their sympathy in resisting any suggestion that direct taxation should be increased. Now, he thought that was a very dangerous line to take. He demurred altogether to the assumption underlying the speech of his right honourable Friend that because we had increased direct taxation we had increased it too much, and disturbed the balance of taxation unjustly as regarded those who contributed to direct taxation. They did not, however, prove anything by citing such figures as those mentioned by his right honourable Friend; and he had heard them cited for a different purpose with the same complacency by his right honourable Friend the Member for West Monmouth. Nothing whatever was proved by such figures except this—they had changed the adjustment of taxation as it existed now from what it was 20 years ago. The taxation was different now from what it was then, but whether it was just now or unjust then was not at all proved by citing such figures from which no conclusion whatever was drawn. The real question was, “Is your adjustment of taxation now just or not?” That was the whole question to be decided, and it could not be decided by getting out the gross totals raised by direct or indirect taxation. They must make a careful and accurate estimate of what was paid by normal classes in order to arrive at the exact proportion of taxation paid by those with £100, £500, £1,000, or £100,000 a year. Only in that way could they ascertain whether the taxation now imposed was or was not approximately just, and only upon that basis could they make such a balance as his right honourable Friend

had made. The House, taken as a whole, was a House of income-tax payers. Everyone in the House paid income-tax, but to appeal to a House of income-tax payers to resist taxation would be one of the most injudicious things that any Chancellor of the Exchequer could indulge in; and to appeal to either side of the House as the special protectors of property, as against an equal adjustment of taxation, would be, he was sure, far from the thoughts of his right honourable Friend. As far as he could ascertain from the investigations made by statisticians into the subject—although he confessed that those investigations were not of a recent character—he should say that the adjustment of taxation now was pretty fairly distributed between different classes of taxpayers. If the balance erred at all at present, it erred in still overtaxing the poor. The rich, as compared with the poor, were not subject to the same burden of taxation. This had been of late in course of correction, partly owing to the legislation of his right honourable Friend opposite, and partly owing to the said income tax; but if they reduced that tax in any serious degree and increased indirect taxation, he thought that the suspicion even now that the poor were overtaxed would become something like a certainty. He should like to suggest one broad view supporting the conclusion which he had offered. Even now, although the discrepancy was in process of correction, and although the error was probably passing away, there might be some ground for assuming that the poorer classes were relatively overtaxed. Two or three years ago investigation was made into the relative taxation of Great Britain and Ireland. As to the practical conclusions from that investigation there were large differences of opinion, and he for one was one of those who thought that Great Britain was not undertaxed compared with Ireland. It was common ground with all who were engaged in the discussion, that if it were not for the set-offs we claimed to take into account, Ireland would be paying too much. Broadly speaking, if they had the same taxes in the two countries, how came it about that they could extract a relatively greater proportion from Ireland than from Great Britain, unless it was

owing to the fact that they had in Ireland a greater proportion of poor people, and a lesser proportion of rich people to make up the balance. His right honourable Friend argued that he could not undertake to impose fresh taxation to keep up the standard of the reduction of Debt which had hitherto existed, because that fresh taxation would involve an increase of direct taxation, and he allowed it to be inferred that the payers of direct taxation were paying more than their proper contribution at present. He then came to the second argument put forward in extenuation of the policy of reducing the amount applicable for the reduction of the Debt—namely, to use the phrase of the honourable and gallant Gentleman the Member for Woodbridge (Captain Pretymann) that we were living in a time of precarious peace and were exposed to something like the expense of war. No doubt we were living in a state of precarious peace, or had been so living. He was sorry to say that we had been on the point of serious differences with one country, but he was glad to think that Lord Salisbury has made that peace somewhat less precarious, if he had not altogether removed any danger of peace being broken, first, by his Treaty with France relating to West Africa; secondly, by the Treaty with regard to the Soudan and the Nile; and lastly, by the arrangement with the Tsar of Russia with respect to China. He himself thought that peace had at all times been regarded as more precarious than it was. There was not in the nature of things that danger of war between this country and other countries of the Continent which was represented. The danger, such as it was, had, in his opinion, been augmented by men who ought to have done their best to lessen it, and in this respect he could make no difference between Members of both political Parties. Lord Salisbury had been bent on making reasonable and just Treaties with our neighbours on the Continent, but his hand was certainly not helped. The temper of diplomacy was not sweetened by the action taken by prominent men of both Parties. No steadying voice came from those who, in opposition and in independence, might have helped the Prime Minister in his progress in peaceful diplomacy. Instead, they had voices rather of threat-

ening exhortation, sometimes adjuring Lord Salisbury to be more forcible than he was supposed to be, epithets and arguments used which would make peace precarious, and which did not facilitate the actions of the Foreign Minister. But in relation to the question now before the House he would suggest that, however precarious the peace was, until the peace was absolutely broken there was no reason for arresting or diminishing the reduction of the Debt. Until war was declared let them go on reducing the Debt, make themselves strong, and in that way prepare for war. Instead of arresting the reduction of the Debt, in view of possible war they should maintain it more resolutely, because thereby they were making the best preparation for war should war break out. It was not as if in this process of paying off the Debt they tied their hands. The thing to be remembered throughout these discussions was that the arrangements which had been made, and which could have been made, did not in any degree fetter the liberty of this Parliament to stop the payment of Debt at a moment's notice. These arrangements only bound ourselves. They imposed no obligation of justice towards anybody. It was essential, in view of the financial situation, that they should recognise that the whole matter of terminable annuities, the new Sinking Fund, and what not, was mere *hocus pocus*. It was a payment taken from the Chancellor of the Exchequer's one pocket to put into the Chancellor's other pocket. The right honourable Gentleman might treat the matter with perfect freedom, or he might ask the House of Commons to modify the arrangement, augment it, or diminish it. In fact, the whole thing was completely under his power. It reminded him of what his honoured friend, the late Lord Bramwell, used to say when they were wont to discuss this business together—

“After all, these Sinking Funds, and terminable annuities and what not, are they anything more than the child's savings bank? You put your money in a box, but you always have the key in your pocket.”

The Chancellor of the Exchequer had always got the key in his pocket. The reason for reducing the allocation of money towards the redemption of Debt which he found told most, which was used by the Chancellor of the Ex-

chequer, and with great effect by the First Lord of the Treasury, was that under present arrangements it was imprudent to buy up Debt, because it would have to be bought up at a premium; that in order to get rid of the nominal capital of £100 something like £111 was spent in doing it; and that we were wasting our resources in redeeming Debt so long as Consols were above par. Now, was there not a fallacy in that argument? He ventured to suggest that there was. His honourable and learned Friend the Member for Launceston did something the previous night to expose that fallacy, but he was afraid his argument did not arrest the attention it deserved. What was the cardinal fact in the present situation round which all arguments must turn, and upon which action must rest? It was that at present the rate of interest in the open market on the best Government securities was but little over 2 per cent. That was a fact, not a mere arrangement of figures made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on a slate which could be wiped out as soon as made. That was a fact of practical experience out of doors. The rate paid on Treasury Bills for some long time past had been less than 2 per cent. But, of course, it would be said that the rate on Treasury Bills was no final criterion as to the rate on Government loans. There was some truth in that, although he thought the rate on Treasury Bills did, in some measure, indicate the standard rate of interest at this moment on the best Government loans. But he would turn to the 2½ per Cents. They were not a very large sum, but still by no means an insignificant sum. They were redeemable in the course of five years, and were selling in the market at 103 plus. What was the rate of interest which a man investing in the 2½ per Cents. at this moment got when allowance was made for the redemption at a premium. It was £1 16s. 3d. per cent. That was a Government stock which did to some extent attest the real measure of Government securities. Consols paid a little more, but then Consols were free from any kind of interference until the year 1924. Until that year they had no power to redeem them, and the question really was—Was it, or was it not, an imprudent thing, when Government stock paid a little over 2 per cent. to the

investor, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give £111 to redeem the liability of paying £2 15s. for a certain number of years, and £2 10s. afterwards up till 1924? Now, it was true that they could not redeem the Debt until 1924, that was to say, they could not reduce the rate of interest that was paid on the nominal capital of £100 until that date; and that was what caused the price of Consols to be so much over £100. But that fact did not establish any reason whatever for interfering with the redemption. He had heard it said that it was very imprudent for the First Lord of the Admiralty to have tied his hands up till 1924 and to commit himself to such a restriction for so long a period. It was very easy to make such a complaint after the event. His right honourable Friend had to consult the conditions of the hour, and it was impossible for him or for anybody else to tell exactly what would happen after 15 or 20 years. Under the circumstances of the time, and in which he was bound to work, he was not warranted in making any other arrangement than he did. He had, when he made that operation, to deal with Consols above par, but he had a very large sum to deal with, and he had to offer the strongest inducement to agents to facilitate the action of their principals to come in. If the House would pardon him, he would mention a fact as an illustration. He was trustee for a small sum in Consols. The *Cestuis que trustent* and himself had to consider whether they should accept his right honourable Friend's offer or not. He himself did not see they would get anything by accepting his right honourable Friend's proposals to give them a certain number of months before they were paid off. He could not see any likelihood of the Funds at the end of that time being any worse than now. So instead of accepting the transformation offered they waited until the end of the period, got their money, and reinvested it. As events turned out, as the time for paying off came Consols dropped, and they were able to reinvest the money, making an addition of something like 3 per cent. to the capital. No doubt, therefore, it was inconvenient that the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer should be tied at the moment, but that was an inconvenience from which they could not escape, and he

ventured to ask whether it would be imprudent under present circumstances to enter on redemption by purchasing Consols at 111! In order to facilitate the understanding the elements of the problem, he invited honourable Members to consider this. Suppose that at this moment we could redeem Consols instead of having to wait until 1924. What would happen? Of course, we would not redeem, but having regard to the state of the money market we should say to holders—"Unless you consent to a reduction of interest from $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 2 per cent. or $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., we shall pay you off, because we can get others to come in and take the obligations which you now hold from us." In fact, if at this moment we were free to deal with Consols, we would be able to reduce the interest to 2 per cent. probably, but certainly $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Consols would, under these conditions, be at par, but what would be the situation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as the redeemer of the permanent national burden of to-day? He would pay £111 in order to escape the burden of £2 15s. per cent. for a number of years, and £2 10s. per cent. for the remainder of the period. Under the imaginary circumstances he had put, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would pay £100 in order to escape a burden of £2 2s. 6d. or £2. The cost of the redemption of the national burden as measured by the circumstances of to-day was precisely the same as the cost would be in 1924 if the condition of the money market was then the same as to-day. Therefore, there was no more reason against redeeming it to-day than there would be in 1924. He thought that his argument had exposed the fallacy which lurked in so many minds, and which the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the First Lord of the Treasury seemed to entertain, that there was at this moment an imprudence in buying Consols at 111 in order to reduce the Debt. The cost of redeeming Debt now was not greater than it would be in 1924. He knew it was said that the rate of interest as shown by Government securities did not really exhibit the rate of interest under natural circumstances, and that we were forcing up the rate by buying in the open market. The price of Consols had gone up because the normal rate of interest had fallen. If his analysis of the situation was true, the

solution of the Savings Bank problem was not to be found in hunting about for fancy modes of investment for the Savings Bank funds. It would be found in the reduction of the interest on the Savings Bank deposits. His right honourable Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer the previous night said very bravely that he was sure the working man did not want any assistance in the way of charity in the interest on his deposits. He felt inclined to say, What a valuable man the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be on the Old-Age Pensions Committee. If they could only recast that Committee they should certainly put him upon it; but at all events they had this satisfaction, that the right honourable Gentleman was there to carefully watch over the conclusions of the Committee whatever they might be. Savings Bank deposits no doubt affected the rate of interest realisable on Government securities, but the fact was that that was an indication of capital growing and accumulating and seeking investment, and the rate of interest was falling in consequence of this great increase of capital. Now, with that long preface it might be supposed he was still very far from the real question, Why should he reduce our Debt? If his argument had proved anything it amounted to this, that the particular objection laid stress upon by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the First Lord of the Treasury against the present measure of reducing Debt as being too costly had no weight, unless they were prepared to say that the process of reducing Debt was always too costly when the rate of interest on Government Stock was about 2½ per cent. It would be an objection if Consols were at par, supposing the rate of interest on Consols was 2 per cent. The reasons for reducing the Debt deserved to be stated afresh. In the first place, in the reduction of Debt we made the best use of the present condition of peace. We prepared ourselves for the contingency of war. In consequence of having reduced our Debt while we were flourishing, we created a reserve power of borrowing, which would enable us to meet the calls of war. Moreover, inasmuch as the sum we applied to the reduction of Debt was entirely under our control, we could at any moment arrest the redemption of Debt, and the sum so saved could be ap-

plied to the usages of war without adding a penny to the taxation of the country. In the next place, by reducing our Debt we established credit, and could borrow again when the need came with greater facility. But to what extent might we anticipate the necessity of borrowing if war came upon us again? Wars were so costly, the expenses of the materials of war and the operations of war were so enormous now, that the Debt we should have to run up, do what we liked, raise our revenue as much as we pleased, would make good, or bad rather, all the recovery we had made in the years of peace. Look at the American Civil War. It was not a very costly war as war now went, in respect of the armament employed, but it caused the creation of a debt of £600,000,000, or 3,000 millions of dollars. He need not refer to the debt of the Franco-German War, and the debt piled up for that. This apprehension of the cost of war was a great reason for reducing our Debt now, because, if war came, we should have to raise the Debt to, and probably above, the level it reached in the worst period of the Great War, certainly above it when the Great War closed. He should be doing injustice to the case if he stopped here. He would go on further and say that, even if we were assured of perpetual peace, he would still urge with all the earnestness in his power the duty of the guardians of the Exchequer of the country to persevere in the reduction of Debt. He sincerely hoped that war was not so near us, nor so probable as many persons were apt to think. Peace had been unbroken for a long time past so far as we were concerned, and we might hope from what had happened in the way of treaties concluded by Lord Salisbury, and from what some hoped might happen at The Hague, that we might have peace for years to come. But if peace were perpetual, if we could be assured against any risk of war through the coming century, he would still urge that the policy of reduction of Debt should be persevered in. He desired to recall the circumstances under which Mr. Gladstone first entered upon his great work of reducing Debt. Mr. Gladstone entered upon that policy not because he apprehended the recurrence of war, but because he foresaw an actual danger coming in due course of time in spite of peace. It was not a war in arms, not a military

struggle which he apprehended, but an industrial struggle which would try this nation in no very distant future. Mr. Gladstone had been reading the speculations of Professor Jevons, who had pointed out with convincing logic that the circumstances on which our commercial predominance depended were necessarily transitory, that in the struggle for industrial supremacy our resources, which we had in such abundance compared with other countries, would become less, while theirs would become more abundant than ours, and that by-and-by these other nations would compete with us on terms of equality, and after that again our condition would be that of inferiority instead of a condition of equality. He knew it was said that the speculations of Professor Jevons had been exploded, and that Mr. Gladstone had been carried away by a too strenuous impulse, by too quick an apprehension of something that had no substantial foundation in fact. He ventured to say that instead of these speculations, being exploded, the circumstances of the hour confirmed them, and justified the action of Mr. Gladstone, and demanded the maintenance of the same policy on the part of whoever might be the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the past our commercial and industrial supremacy had depended upon our reserves of coal and iron being superior and more accessible than those of any other rival Power. We knew—the facts were about us if we opened our mind to see, and to reason upon them—we knew that that predominance was past, and that the particular reason which gave us our superiority had ceased to exist. We had the command of cheap coal, but in the United States at the present moment coal was brought to the pit's mouth of as good quality as ours but at a cheaper rate. In Pennsylvania iron was cheaper than in Great Britain, and the same could be said of steel. With these resources in iron and coal at the command of the Americans, with their manufacturing industry and energy, which they shared in common with ourselves, we saw that our supremacy was passing away. Why was it that steel bridges were being furnished for the Athara river, why were bridges and material being sent to the Siberian railways from America? Why was it that the United States were supplying us here at home with machinery which our own

people could not produce? Did not all these things support the statement that the particular predominance was a thing of the past? American energy was the same as ours, their inventive faculty was the same as ours, but their material resources were richer and greater with them than with us, and therefore in the race of rivalry they must go before us. At home here we were overburdened by impediments from which they had hitherto been free. We ought certainly to use our situation so as to make us more equal to continue the struggle even if other circumstances were adverse to it. He knew that it had been said that the industrial struggle in the United States would be waged in the future under different conditions, and that was true. It might be that the fire water of Imperialism which the Americans had tasted would so interfere with their competition with England as to make England's position not so much in danger as it was. He did not take much comfort from that consideration. He hoped they would not realise any advantage from the evil befalling another country. It appeared to him that the whole circumstances of the hour, apart from those to which he had referred, showed that in the United States they had industrial competitors most seriously threatening their present and endangering their future. As he had previously stated, they had plenty of coal and iron, but upon those prime factors all their great industries rested, and they might see that, in respect of the manufacture of cotton, the United States last year worked up more cotton than we did. That was only a step in the competition in shipbuilding for which iron and steel are great factors, and in respect of both they had beaten us. It was no use concealing the future from themselves, or trying to escape comment. The statesmen of the next generation might have the most difficult of all tasks to enter upon. They were already feeling the pressure of the underlying fact which was at the bottom of this discussion about the redemption of Debt, and that was the low rate of interest which was now prevailing. What did it mean? Why, that they were accumulating capital, but that the modes of profitably occupying it were ceasing amongst them. It was not in England, but elsewhere, that the

most profitable mode of employing capital was to be found, and they were in danger of falling into the position of a *rentière* nation—living upon a capital which they lent to others, but which circumstances prevented them employing profitably at home. They had seen in Ireland in their own generation in the last half of the nineteenth century a population, through economic causes, dwindling and passing away. If the economic causes which prevailed in the case of Ireland affected their industrial population they might have to deal with a similar phenomenon, and he knew of no more difficult task for a statesman of the future than that of having to control the destinies of this country if at some future time their population and industries diminished. It might be said, and said truly, that this was too broad a base upon which to place a small matter of £2,000,000 in connection with the redemption of Debt. He admitted that it was too broad a base, for the question of the £2,000,000 in itself was a comparatively small matter, but it was the symbol of a great deal more. It regarded the future which they ought to have in view. They might diminish the cost of the National Debt and they might carry on the redemption of the Debt and get rid of the £17,000,000 which they were now paying for interest. That would be a very small gain if the £17,000,000 spent on the reduction of the Debt was a mere substitution of £17,000,000 spent on armaments. If they piled up one useless expenditure in the place of another they got nothing back. It was necessary in the present situation to insist, if they realised the conditions of their industrial life, and if they had any apprehension of what lay in the future in the struggle for industrial supremacy between England and other nations, to say that now when they were still safe, when they had abundant occupation for their people, when they were most prosperous, they should use every endeavour in order to prepare for the future by removing the impediments which might become serious obstacles to their continued progress. It might be said that those were the anxieties of the closet and the mere fears of the *doctrinaire*. Those anxieties were with them in their markets both at home and abroad, and having such a serious view

of what they ought to do with respect to the future in arranging the finances of the day he must express his profound regret that his right honourable Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not rise to the height of the occasion, and did not meet the difficulty of keeping up the small amount, after all, which was set aside for the redemption of the Debt, and did not determine that he would do nothing which would cause the coming generation to be still fettered by difficulties which they did not feel now, but which they could relieve now with no great strain, but which, when their time came, might be indeed felt as an impediment keeping them back in the race for existence and the struggle for life.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): The House has just listened with the attention it deserves to a speech of singular ability and close reasoning, followed by warnings which will be long remembered, in a protest against the financial proposals of the Government. There is no doubt that we have arrived at a very grave condition which deserves and demands the consideration of this House, which is responsible for national finance; and on national finance depends national prosperity. What is that situation? At a time when we have realised a heavier revenue than this country has ever known, in a year in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer calculates upon an increase of £2,000,000 to his revenue on the existing basis beyond that of the year that has passed—in that condition of things the Finance Minister of Great Britain and Ireland presents himself to the House of Commons and the country and declares that he is unable to meet the financial situation except by recourse to despoiling the fund for the liquidation of Debt. That is the situation, one of the gravest which has ever been presented to the House of Commons. I am speaking not of a temporary suspension to meet a temporary evil or temporary embarrassment, for a temporary embarrassment does not exist; I am speaking of a proposal which is to affect not us of this generation alone, but, as my right honourable Friend opposite has just said, is to affect future times in reference to our financial policy, and I think we ought to consider

what we in this Parliament and this Administration have done to bring about such a situation as that. Therefore, considering how elaborate and how sufficient has been the examination that has been made by my right honourable Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, and my honourable and learned Friend behind me, and still more, perhaps, by my right honourable Friend the Member for Bodmin, of the details of this particular proposition, I would ask the indulgence of the House while I endeavour to recall to their recollection what has been their own work in this present Parliament, and how far it has tended to bring about this unhappy result. The Chancellor of the Exchequer up to this time has had a pretty easy life. He was the heir of a highly solvent estate. He has reduced it to a declaration of partial insolvency. He has diverted in successive years the old Sinking Fund, which, according to our principles of finance, should have gone to the liquidation of the old Debt. He alleges, it is true, that he has used it, not for that purpose, but for averting new things. But it is a Debt all the same, whether you apply it to the extinction of the old Debt or use it for a new Debt which he himself has created. He has had what may be called plain sailing. He has been fortunate in having inherited a large revenue, and he has disposed of it merrily among a favoured few. It happens that the funds in which he now stands in need and for which he is going to rob the fund for the liquidation of the Debt amount almost exactly to the sums which he has bestowed on agricultural rates and upon Voluntary schools. We all remember very well how in the case of the grant to agricultural rates we did not even wait for the report on the condition of the agricultural industry, an interim Report being rushed through for that particular appropriation, which, when the Report appeared, was shown to be entirely unjustifiable, and ever since that appropriation was made in each Budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer has congratulated himself and his friends on the prosperous condition of agriculture. That is the first method he has taken to dispose of his surplus. Then Voluntary schools he has allotted £600,000 or thereabouts, and we have been assured this Session that the first result has been what we all predicted—

Sir W. Harcourt.

it has redounded to the advantage of Voluntary subscribers, and probably— for, of course, this process is infectious—it will be a result largely extended in the future. I am told also it has been appropriated to the payment of rents and not to the improvement of education. It has in a considerable degree been diverted from the purpose for which it was avowedly intended. Well, with these great surpluses, which if you calculate them one way amount to £9,000,000, the right honourable Gentleman has enjoyed, according to my calculation, £2,000,000 more, by anticipation of surpluses, and during the whole period the taxpayer of the country has enjoyed only one relief from taxation, in the abortive tobacco duty, from which the consumer derives small advantage, and in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been largely disappointed. Then we have had four years of immensely increasing revenue attended also by exaggerated expenditure, which has exceeded the growth of revenue. Now, the right honourable Gentleman last night—and I was a little bit surprised at it—treated me as if I had been habitually a captious and partisan opponent to his finance. Well, I think that the right honourable Gentleman could not have intended that, because I have never found him an unfair advocate. As long as the right honourable Gentleman was an adherent of the old established school of finance—of orthodox finance—and I am as much attached to orthodoxy in finance as I am to orthodoxy in other matters—but when I find the Chancellor of the Exchequer indulging in most malignant heresies, of which I believed him to be entirely innocent, he must allow me to oppose him upon this occasion. On other occasions I have been rather disappointed with his proposals, but I have endeavoured to give him what protection I could against the raiders upon the Treasury who sit around him, and we have fought many a good battle together against those who have endeavoured to plunder the treasure of which he is guardian. Up to this I have certainly admired and done what I could to support his standard, and when he strayed from the right path I thought I saw in the interesting explanation of the position which we had last night a true account of the present situation.

We were told that a department—and I am sorry to think the Treasury should be such a department—are, after all, subordinate instruments of the Cabinet, by which they are controlled. That, I think, was the departmental doctrine that was preached to us by the Vice-President of the Council on Education, and I deeply regret that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should find himself in a similar position. Well, the Chancellor of the Exchequer began with a surplus of £4,000,000 or £5,000,000, and after four years he presents himself to the House with a deficit of £3,000,000. I remember very well in his first Budget in 1896 he lectured me on the offence of a Chancellor of the Exchequer who left a surplus behind him.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: No, no!

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Yes, he said it was a feather in the cap of a Chancellor of the Exchequer when he had only a nominal surplus. Well, then, are we to suppose it is an added feather in his cap when he has an actual deficit? He said it was the proper thing for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to be accurate in his Estimates and not to take more from the taxpayers than was necessary. Well, I suppose my example was demoralising, because for two or three years he went on adding surplus to surplus as the result of a system of finance he found in existence, but now he comes down this year and at the commencement of his Budget says—"Ah, at last I have got the right manner of dealing with finance. I have no surplus to speak of. There is a trifle of £186,000, but everybody thought I was wrong though I knew better than that. I am right, and I was always right." Well, Sir, there is an old copybook maxim—"Self praise is no recommendation," and in this case I venture to point out to the right honourable Gentleman that the result of his balance for the year just concluded is not the result of accurate estimates but of inaccurate estimates on both sides of the account. As to the accuracy of his estimated revenue, the right honourable Gentleman received £1,200,000 beyond his estimate of revenue, but to make it all right he exceeded his estimate of expenditure by almost exactly the same amount, and therefore

he achieved the financial triumph of making two blacks into a white, getting a microscopic surplus as the result of two erroneous actions. On the whole I prefer the method that he denounced to that which he has adopted. The right honourable Gentleman exceeded his estimate of expenditure by great supplementary estimates, and I do not think any Government has ever exceeded in the form of supplementary estimates the expenditure to anything like the degree which has been practised in this Parliament. It is a very dangerous and a very evil practice. It deprives the House of that regular control it ought to have over expenditure; it confuses the financial balance upon which Parliament is called upon to determine at the time the Budget is presented. But the right honourable Gentleman was saved from disaster by two sources of revenue; his salvation was due, first of all, to the great increase in the yield of the death duties beyond his estimate. The right honourable Gentleman says I have always envied him the yield of the death duties, but I can assure him that is not the fact. I have rejoiced in his prosperity and the greatness of his revenue, partly from personal regard for himself and partly because it has been an advantage to the country to which I belong; but the real truth is, I think, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been demoralised by the predictions of the honourable Member for King's Lynn.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: And your own.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: It has slightly exceeded my own, but it largely exceeded the estimate of the honourable Member for King's Lynn, who, on the Third Reading of the Bill said that less would be received.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: The First Lord of the Admiralty said the same thing.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: And the House could not follow a worse example, for the First Lord of the Admiralty was not fortunate in finance. But, Sir, I am very glad if I have contributed in the slightest degree to rescue the right honourable Gentleman from the deficit which he apprehended. But there was

one other thing which saved him, and that was the increase in the yield of the income-tax, which I agree with the right honourable Gentleman who has just sat down the Chancellor of the Exchequer held up to the Party behind him as a source of taxation which was to be deplored and resisted, and upon which I shall have something to say in relation to the language used—the most formidable and dangerous that has been used by a Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right honourable Gentleman was saved by the increase of the income-tax yield, but he dropped one sentence which, to those acquainted with the Treasury conveyed a great deal. He said that that yield of the income-tax last year was due to a “closer collection” than there was in the year before, and anticipated part of what would be expected this year. Well, we know at the Treasury very well what that means—when a Chancellor of the Exchequer is trembling in anticipation of a deficit he has a closer collection of the income-tax.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: No, no!

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then I must have misunderstood the right honourable Gentleman.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: If the right honourable Gentleman implies that I issued instructions for a closer collection of the income-tax he is mistaken.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I carefully avoided saying that.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I never did anything of the sort, and I don't believe any Chancellor of the Exchequer has ever done so.

SIR W. HARCOURT: No; but how came there to be a closer collection than in the year before?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: A collection of arrears.

SIR W. HARCOURT: It had reference to arrears. Well, I do not wish to misrepresent the right honourable Gentleman, but, knowing what I do of the Treasury, I confess I thought otherwise.

Sir W. Harcourt.

Allow me to state to the House what is one of the most remarkable features of these four years during which the Conservative Party have been responsible for Her Majesty's Government. In 1895, the last year for which I was responsible, the right honourable Gentleman quite truly stated that my estimate of the revenue of that year was £103,000,000 — that is to say, £96,000,000 of revenue to the Exchequer and £7,000,000 to local taxation. In 1899, in four years of the present Parliament, the revenue has been £110,300,000, and £9,000,000 to local taxation. That is in round numbers £120,000,000. This means that you have had in those four years a growth of revenue of £17,000,000 a year. There is one sentence in the right honourable Gentleman's Budget speech in which I can cordially concur. He says that this immense growth of revenue “may warn us to be careful how we pass from the old-established financial policy of the country and embark on a new departure in the matter of our fiscal system.” If ever there was an argument to convince a reasonable House of Commons and an intelligent nation of the soundness of their fiscal and their currency system it is the fact that in four years the progress of the revenue under that system should have been £17,000,000. What has that been caused by? It has been caused first of all by the free trade of this country, what we may call “the open-door.” It has been caused by the well-being of the mass of the people produced by the reduction of indirect taxation. It has been produced by that policy which was inaugurated by Peel, which was extended and expounded and acted upon by Gladstone, and which has been followed up with unequal steps by those who trod the road which they have pointed out. It is a policy which has placed you in possession of this superb and gigantic revenue. It is right that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should make that observation upon the great revenue which he has at his disposal, because it is, I am ashamed to say, not unnecessary in these days when we see organs of opinion which ought to know better propounding the superannuated heresies which distinguished the evil financial days of the early part of the century, when we see advocated the repetition of those financial blunders when

people thought that they could raise a great revenue by imposing a multitude of duties upon a great variety of articles. No, we have been taught by the masters whom we have followed that the foundation of a great revenue is simplicity of taxation, that this gigantic edifice rests upon a few great columns, and that it is not dependent for its support upon a rotten scaffolding of petty impositions of the character of which we have been delivered within the last half-century. The growth of this revenue has not been the invention of any new system of finance by the present Administration. It has been due to the fact that the right honourable Gentleman has been content, and wisely content, to adopt and act upon the financial system which he found in operation at the time he came into office. But then we have to look at the other side of the account. Now, the expenditure of the country is the work of the Administration. Let us see what has been the growth of that expenditure. The last year of the expenditure for which we were responsible in our Government was £103,000,000. Last year in his Budget speech the right honourable Gentleman called special attention to the fact that it was £116,000,000; and to that this year he adds £6,000,000 more; so that the expenditure has grown—as he stated last night—

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Estimated.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes, estimated. I am afraid that the real expenditure will be a good deal more. The estimated expenditure is the minimum, but we have to add to that the Supplementary Estimates. I will, however, take the estimated expenditure as £122,000,000. Now, that is an increase in the four years of £19,500,000 in the annual expenditure of the country. There is a point to which I desire to call the attention of the House and the country—that this Parliament and this Government have added to the annual expenditure of the country a sum exceeding by £2,000,000 the whole charge of the National Debt. I venture to say that this is a figure and a statement which the House and every man in the country ought to ponder and have upon his conscience. I am a little surprised

to hear my right honourable Friend the Member for Bodmin repeat the vulgar error as to the National Debt, as to speak of the capital of it. There is no “capital” of the National Debt. The National Debt is an annuity and an annual payment of an annuity. The annual payment is £17,000,000 a year. By the prudence and self-denial of those who have gone before us we had reduced that annual payment by almost a half. It was at one time £33,000,000. What have we now? Though you have relieved the country of a payment of some £15,000,000 of that annual payment, you have added in four years £19,500,000 to be charged on the taxpayers of the country. Is that a situation which the House of Commons or the taxpayer can view with equanimity? I do not wonder that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is staggered by it. In his Budget speech the right honourable Gentleman said—

“One thing is quite clear—that it is impossible, however great the prosperity of the country may be, for such increases as £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 a year to be met by an automatic increase of our existing taxation, immense as that has been. The country must make up their minds to a great increase of existing taxes, and also to the discovery of new sources of revenue.”

He did not say, though he might have said, “to the abandonment of all attempts to reduce the National Debt,” which is the example he has shown. Then he says—

“I venture to prophesy that the result of this will be necessarily a reaction against this great expenditure.”

Yes, Sir, I devoutly hope that that will be the result, and when the facts of the financial history of these last four years sink deep into the heart of the country, that there will be a reaction against this vast, this unlimited expenditure. I confess I think that I see some symptom in the country of the beginning of that reaction. I know the right honourable Gentleman deploras it, for he has begun to minister to it by cutting off the fund for the reduction of the Debt. That will only serve him for a very short time, and when he has also swallowed up the other £5,000,000 still left, then he will at last have recourse to increased taxation, and he has promised that that shall not be direct taxation. Google

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I never said that.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I will quote his words directly, and I should be happy if the right honourable Gentleman would give another explanation which differs from that which the words appear to convey. To what is the immense expenditure due? It is due in the first place to that hunger which seems to have been propagated in the minds of the country—it is the discontent with your existing possessions. It is due to those ruinous enterprises which are stated to be made on commercial grounds. It is due to those trade principles according to which you put down a sovereign in order to take up half-a-crown. That is the character of those enterprises. It has been due to that spirit which Lord Salisbury has wisely and gravely condemned—that desire to fight everybody and to take everything. That is the meaning of this vast and intolerable growth of expenditure. There is a calculation which I think conveyed to me the true mind of the Chancellor of the Exchequer uncontrolled by his colleagues; and I would like to restate it to the House, because it has a considerable bearing on this question. In his Budget speech last year the right honourable Gentleman gave a very interesting calculation of the expenditure on the Army and Navy of Great Britain and the Powers of Europe. He said that the total expenditure of the British Empire on the Army and Navy was £63,500,000. This year you add £3,000,000. That is £66,500,000. Then he gives France. Their expenditure on the army and navy was £36,400,000; Germany, £35,250,000; Russia, £38,500,000. The average of the three great military Powers of Europe is therefore very little more than half your expenditure. Then the right honourable Gentleman proceeded to explain why it was necessary and justifiable to have such an immense expenditure, and pointed out that Great Britain has 80,000,000 more population than the three empires put together. That is the little England of which we are called upon to be ashamed, and which he desires so much to extend. He said we had 11,250,000 square miles of possessions, and that the three Great Powers had 13,750,000, and therefore our

geographical extent was not much less than that of all these other Powers put together, and our population is 80,000,000 more. And yet we are not satisfied. We must extend our territories at the risk of war. We must go on taking possession of vast deserts, occupied only by savage tribes; not a useful population, such as was found in India, but a population unused and unwilling to labour, whom you can only hold by force. We are justly proud of what is called the "thin red line of England," but when you extend the "thin red line of England" from the Cape to Cairo it will be a very thin red line indeed, and the distance between the files will be very great indeed. Hitherto we have been dealing with colonies of men of our own race and blood, who are used to industry and labour. We have had our trade among a wealthy and docile people like those of Hindustan. We have desired, and justly desired, to secure our commerce amongst great and rich populations like those in China; but you are going to effect a great commercial speculation at the Equator. I take leave to doubt whether that is likely to be a good commercial speculation. No, Sir, the right honourable Gentleman is quite right to say that he only spoke of estimated expenditure, but will he give us his idea of the expenditure five years hence upon the liabilities which he has undertaken to-day? The history of this policy which has reduced us to the condition in which we now find ourselves is a policy of "wilds immeasurably spread," which seem lengthening as we go. As there is no limit to this ambition of what is called expansion, so there will be no limit to the expenditure of the country and the calls upon the taxpayer. If you believe the taxpayers of the country desire that expansion, why have you not had the courage to call upon them to pay for it? Do you mean to deceive them into the belief by suspending your Sinking Fund that they may have it "dirt cheap"? They will not have it dirt cheap. You know the estimates which were given at first for the occupation and for the railway to Uganda. You know what they are now. The enterprises in Africa was to cost us nothing at all. I congratulate and I thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he has made up his mind not to

pledge the credit of the country for these wild-cat speculations. What will happen? We know that these estimates which begin with a few thousands very soon mount up to millions. These speculations may be excused and condoned in individual gambling land-grabbers, but they are not enterprises which should be entered upon by wise and prudent statesmen. It is the ambition of a policy of this kind which accounts for the growth of the expenditure. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer tells us he has no hope of reducing this expenditure. He hopes that it may not increase, and his confidence lies in the conference which Russia has summoned. I share the hope of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but I should like to know how much he expects from that Conference. No doubt it is an extremely good thing that Russia should have summoned this Conference. I ventured almost the last time I addressed the House of Commons, on the Appropriation Bill last year, to urge upon the Government that the policy they ought to pursue was to come to a good understanding with Russia, a policy of conciliation. I deeply regret that that suggestion upon my part was met by the First Lord of the Treasury with language of courteous contempt.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: No.

SIR W. HARCOURT: He declined my suggestion that the real solution was reconciliation and conciliation with Russia, instead of a long spoon policy. That is what I call courteous contempt. There was language which conveyed the idea that it was preposterous. It was absurd to suppose that the question, especially of China, could be solved by an arrangement with Russia. If I misunderstood the right honourable Gentleman I withdraw the observation, but Lord Salisbury has had the courage and the skill to come to an arrangement with Russia, which is of good omen. And no difference of political Party shall prevent me from offering my testimony to the work he has done in coming to a good understanding with France and in making arrangements of a friendly character with Russia. I at least will not come under the condemnation of my right honourable Friend the Member for Bodmin, who said, and truly said, that

there were persons, without distinction of sides in this House, who would not promote a conciliatory policy, but rather adopted a policy of aggravation and defiance. I believe, though I have no authority to speak for anyone but myself, that I am expressing the opinion of the great majority of the Gentlemen who sit upon this side of the House when I say that their desire would not be to weaken, but to strengthen the hands of the Government in carrying out a policy which will be approved and supported by all those who seek peace to insure it. Well now I wish, if I am not wearying the House, to say something upon the proposals of the Budget itself. Yes. I venture to say that it is not inappropriate commentary on the Budget to inquire how the situation which leads to the result has been brought about. In one of the comments which I saw last week it is called niggling and petty finance. The Budget seems to me to labour under the same error which in former times I have criticised in the Budget of the present First Lord of the Admiralty. It is an endeavour to raise money of small amount by methods which are vexatious and disturbing to the industry of the country. That is bad finance. You ought to trust to some great items upon which you can rely. That is the sound finance which has produced these great revenues. It is not the old finance which was properly called petty and niggling. Take first of all the wine duties. I have carefully considered this question, because it was during my first term at the Treasury that I reduced the duty on cheap wines, the wines of low alcoholic strength, from 2s. 6d. to 1s. The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to reincrease those duties by 50 per cent. I think he will disturb the trade very much, and he will get very little out of it. We have a superb revenue. By what process? We have simplified our Customs, we have struck off items by the hundred, and we have received as much or more from the Customs than ever we did before. We have reduced our Excise, and our Excise, in spite of all you have given away, is still highly profitable. We have consolidated the death duties, and you have lived upon their proceeds for four years. All that teaches the lesson of what I call simplicity of finance. As regards the duty on high-

priced wines, I have nothing to say against it. It is a duty upon a commodity which is consumed by the wealthy classes who are able to bear additional taxation; but to put an additional tax on the lighter and cheaper wines is, in my opinion, an extremely impolitic proceeding. As to stamps, I do not profess to offer an opinion with any confidence. I know very well I found in existence a tax on foreign securities imposed by the present First Lord of the Admiralty. It was known in the City by the name of the "Goschen blister." I do not know whether it was every week, every month, or every year that a man had to take a piece of paper and put an additional stamp on it. The right honourable Gentleman said, "You should not tease the merchants." There is another thing I have learned with regard to the Stock Exchange, and that is that you ought not to provoke them. Well, Sir, I removed that tax and replaced it by a shilling contract note which I learned would not be objected to and which has produced a great deal more than the original blister. No doubt the principal feature of the Budget is this lamentable invasion of the fund for the liquidation of the Debt. This has been from many points so largely and ably discussed that I shall not attempt now to repeat the arguments. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has assured us that it has no connection whatever with the Debt. I always accept the assurances of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, though I think it would have tried the credulity of the Jew of old who went by the name of Apella. I accept that assurance on the same ground as the man of great faith in old days—*credo quia impossibile*. That, no doubt, is the great test of faith. The impossibility of the thing tries your faith and at the same time proves it. But what makes it more difficult to understand is that only last year, when Consols were higher, and when the arguments the right honourable Gentleman has used this year were in full force, he appealed to the House not to deal with the reduction of the Debt on the ground of the great growth of local taxation, and it is difficult to believe that he had it in his mind all the time to reduce the fund for the liquidation of the Debt this year. Many attempts have been made to justify this course. The *tu quoque* argument is the most popular of all argu-

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ments with the right honourable Gentleman, and he has resorted to it. He said it is only what Mr. Gladstone did with reference to the long annuities. That has been disposed of by my right honourable Friend the Member for Wolverhampton. Mr. Gladstone condemned absolutely the process which the right honourable Gentleman has followed. In 1860 Mr. Gladstone said this—

"Are we to be told that, when a sum of £2,000,000 which we have hitherto been obliged to pay to the National Debt comes into our possession, it only remains for us to cast it into the great gulf of expenditure there to be swallowed up and disappear."

You quoted Mr. Gladstone as the example you have followed. He said—

"That sum is mighty as an engine for the proposed relief, while for purposes of expenditure such as expenditure now is, it is comparatively unimportant."

Mr. Gladstone used that fund for the entire reconstruction of our financial system which has been the root and foundation of all this great revenue which you enjoy. Then the right honourable Gentleman said I have done the same thing. What I did was done in 1886 when the revenue was falling and not increasing. When I did not feel sure of the revenue coming up to the mark, I suspended as a precaution for that year, and that year only, three-quarters of a million of the fund, and as the revenue increased I recovered that amount, and the amount I paid out of my Budget that year was the whole of the sum originally contemplated, and nearly a million more than my successor with a sufficient revenue paid for redemption of the Debt for the three succeeding years. But when we came into office in 1892 they were not easy times for us. We had not a majority of 50 at our backs. We had not a rising but a falling revenue, and we had every temptation to have recourse to such expedients as those to which the right honourable Gentleman has resorted. But in the year 1893, on behalf of the Government of that day, I made this statement—

"We cannot recommend the Committee to meet its liabilities by encroaching further on the funds set apart for the liquidation of the Debt. In our opinion that is a fund not to be tampered with in ordinary times and normal deficiency, but reserved for great emergencies. This is the keystone of sound and solid finance,

and we are not prepared further to weaken its foundations. These are courses which the Government are not prepared to recommend. They only serve to encourage extravagance by concealing and palliating for the moment its effects, and therefore promoting its growth. There is, in our opinion, only one sound and straightforward means of meeting this deficit, and that is by increased taxation. This is the only policy which is worthy of a solvent and wealthy nation which finds itself over-spending."

That was our policy and we acted upon it. That was the policy of the Budget of 1893 and the Budget of 1894. We are told that it would be very unpopular to impose taxes. Indirect taxes are unpopular. Direct taxes will be more unpopular in the view of the right honourable Gentleman. We propounded to the House of Commons a scheme for indirect taxes. An honourable Gentleman said last night that no Government could be expected to court unpopularity by imposing taxes. Do you suppose we risked no unpopularity when we imposed taxes on beer and spirits? Do you suppose we risked no unpopularity when, in the face of a powerful Opposition, we proposed the scheme of the Death Duties? A Gentleman said last night that no Government would risk its existence. But we did risk our existence upon what we believed to be sound and solid principles of finance, and we were supported by the House of Commons and were approved of by the country? [Cheers and Ministerial laughter.] Were we not approved of by the country? [Ministerial cries of "No."] Why, then, have you not reversed our policy? The Chancellor of the Exchequer himself has stated that the result of that policy is such as to warn everyone against departing from its principles. In my opinion, one of the great sources of our success with all the feebleness of our resources was that we had the courage to meet the situation. I believe that, in spite of your apparent strength and your great majority, you will not derive support when the people understand and believe that you have shirked the liabilities which your great expenditure demands that you should meet. I cannot think, Sir, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has derived much consolation from the financial organs of this metropolis, who are supposed to understand the feeling in financial circles. This is

what the "Economist" said last week of his Budget—

"As to the raid on the Sinking Fund, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is not likely to continue to put forward the hollow pretence that his object in despoiling it is to safeguard it against possible future depredations. That sham has been exposed and is not likely to be persisted in. For in reality Sir Michael Hicks Beach does nothing to protect the fund in future, and merely sets an example of robbing it, which, if sanctioned by Parliament, will constitute an evil precedent."

It goes on to say—

"But, in virtue of having thus disposed in advance of the amount which would fall in during 1902-3, he holds himself justified in robbing the fund of £2,000,000 a year. Now he maintains that it would be a financial sin to leave the fund in danger of being reduced by £2,000,000 a couple of years hence, but claims it as a financial virtue to reduce it by £2,000,000 at once. That is what he calls safeguarding the fund, since, as we have said, it is only the annuities that come to an end in 1902-3 that he is now dealing with. As regards those expiring in 1904-5 and 1905-6, all that he has done is to set an example of spoliation. And, in these circumstances, talk about acting in the best interests of the Sinking Fund is pure cant."

I think that is an accurate description of the policy recommended by the Government. The Treasury minute, professing—but, perhaps, I ought to refer to the statement of the First Lord of the Treasury to the ladies of the Primrose League. We all know that with ladies a very little arithmetic goes far, and that it does not signify whether you talk of thousands or millions. The First Lord of the Treasury drew a terrible picture to them of the loss of £800,000, which would build an ironclad and do all sorts of other things. That was what he said we were losing. He was wrong to the extent of a quarter of a million.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The right honourable Gentleman has repeated the blunder of the "Economist." I have corrected it, and the "Economist" has acknowledged it. I made no blunder.

SIR W. HARCOURT: No blunder in arithmetic. Well, Sir, he explained away, as I understand, his statement by saying that the statement he intended to make was one that was different from that which he did make.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: No. The right honourable Gentleman is not a lady of the Primrose League, and, I presume, has no direct experience of what I did say. What I have said I said is what I did say.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then the fault was with the reporters?

MR. BALFOUR: Yes.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then we will put it in that way.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Does the right honourable Gentleman indicate I did not make the statement I said I made?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Oh, no. I am reminded of a warning that was once given to me when I was at the Bar by a Judge. He said—

“Never be afraid of the Judges; they are sitting up there, and they can't come down.”

Well, at all events I will address myself to the argument to which the right honourable Gentleman did address himself, which was in the Treasury Minute. He now says that the loss would be £180,000. I think you will find that in the corrected statement. Whose arithmetic it is I do not know, but the whole loss upon this investment would be £180,000. This is all owing to the fact that Consols are so high. But then the Chancellor of the Exchequer tells us that Consols will become higher still. Well, then, what is the use of adducing an argument of that kind now. It will be much stronger next year or the year after, when Consols do rise, for reducing the fund than it is to-day. The third argument is that there are less Consols in the market. You say Consols are becoming scarcer in the market every day and will ultimately disappear. That will be a conclusive argument for every Chancellor of the Exchequer to come forward and say it is his first duty to diminish the Debt Fund, relying on precisely the same argument that you have relied upon to-day. Therefore, the only conclusion that we can draw from the Treasury Minute is that every Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to take the phrase of the First Lord of the Treasury

and *pro tanto* diminish the fund for liquidating the Debt. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer has another ground, a far stronger ground than these pretexts—we cannot call them arguments—of the Treasury Minute. He says he took the £2,000,000 in case that in the year 1902 there should arise some evil Chancellor of the Exchequer who might apply it to the reduction of indirect taxation. That is the ground upon which he says he will bespeak this sum. He says he will bespeak this £2,000,000 in order to prevent an operation which might take place in reference to this fund in the year 1902.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Will the right honourable Gentleman allow me. I said I proposed to bespeak the £2,000,000 now, and, in order to prevent the sum already bespoken being appropriated again, to extend the term of the terminable annuities.

SIR W. HARCOURT: To prevent the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1902 from dealing with that sum.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: It is already appropriated.

SIR W. HARCOURT: He appropriates the £2,000,000, and appropriates it to expenditure. That is the point. I am not complaining of his continuing the annuities. Well, now, it has been said that there is great mischief and inconvenience in the investment of the Savings Bank money as raising the price of Consols. I admit that. The right honourable Gentleman has been invited to appoint a Committee of this House to settle the question. I am against referring a question of that kind to a Committee. I do not know how the Committee would be constituted or who would preside. I have seen the suggestion that the Chair would be taken by the *fidus Achates* of the Colonial Secretary, that the Under Secretary of the Home Department should preside over a Committee to ascertain in what securities you should invest the money of the Savings Bank instead of in Consols. I entirely agree, and I have always agreed—the Chancellor of the Exchequer knows it well—that the remedy is not to take

inferior securities. In regard to the Savings Bank, the Government is a banker and nothing else. It is a banker in this peculiar position—that it has 150 or 170 millions sterling at call. It has no reserves at all. Bankers have often complained of competition, that they are obliged to keep reserves. The Government has no reserve. The right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty, when he discoursed on the subject of reserves, referred frequently to this matter. He was alarmed lest there should be a run at some time on the Savings Bank. I do not share that fear; but this I do say—that the Government, holding 170 millions sterling upon deposit, have no business to invest that money in anything except the very best security they can get. I am old enough to have known occasions when it was impossible to realise in the market anything except Consols. They were the only securities upon which money could be had at all. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has said he wished to have opinions from everybody upon that subject. He knows mine, for we have frequently discussed the matter. The Government, as bankers, offer great advantages to the depositors. It gives them a branch everywhere, they can carry their deposit wherever their labour goes, it offers them every species of advantage, and it has no right to call upon the other taxpayers of the country to give them any advantage, except that which the money will yield. The interest that you pay upon the savings ought to correspond accurately with the cost. That is the only principle upon which you can or ought to proceed. The right honourable Gentleman has asked my opinion before upon it, and he knows what my opinion is; it is that, if necessary, you ought to lower the interest you are paying. It is suggested you ought to invest in Indian securities. We do not know what may happen in India. We have had mutinies and famines there, and we cannot treat Indian securities as of the very first class. Then it is said there are Colonial securities. What a mess you would be in if you invested more in one Colony than in another. You would have every kind of jealousy. Everybody knows that if a few years ago you had invested in Australian securities, you would have felt very uneasy indeed; and, therefore,

you have no business to take any securities except Consols. It is said that you should take municipal securities. There, again, all sorts of jealousies would arise. I protest against that system, and I believe the First Lord of the Admiralty will agree with me. I have never known anybody who has been responsible for the administration of these funds who has not seen the dangers of which I have spoken, and therefore that is not a method which can be adopted. There was one point referred to by the honourable Member for Bodmin to which I must allude. I regret, of course, the result that in the midst of abundance the right honourable Gentleman should present a Budget of deficiency, a scheme of finance which, in my opinion, shows an unwillingness on the part of the country to meet the expenditure by taxation. My right honourable Friend the Member for Bodmin condemned that policy; and his condemnation was not received with entire disapproval even on his own side of the House. I was glad to hear the protest against the treatment of the Debt which was made by the honourable Member for Islington (Mr. Cohen) in a previous Debate. He is a great financial authority, and, though I have seldom enjoyed the advantage of his vote, I have always valued the adherence of his opinion. Another financial authority on the other side of the House, the honourable Member for Brixton (Mr. Hubbard), said there was a danger to the country lest the anxiety of a Government to avoid the unpopularity involved in the proposal of new sources of taxation impelled them to a system of cowardly, niggardly, and paltry finance. That is exactly what this attempt to avoid unpopularity has caused the present Government to do. The evil precedent was set by a former Chancellor of the Exchequer of the Party opposite, the present First Lord of the Admiralty, who, in a time of abundant revenue, laid his hands upon two millions of the Sinking Fund for the purpose of gaining popularity by diminishing taxation. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for Bodmin, turning round to his Friends behind him, said—

“If you are to have additional taxation, why don't you go upon the lines of direct taxation?”

He addressed the Unionist and Conservative Party as if they were the natural

enemies of direct taxation. He charges us with the intention in the future of diminishing indirect taxation. Well, I accept the impeachment. On this side of the House we are the opponents of indirect taxation. In the Debates on the Budget of 1894, the present First Lord of the Admiralty said to me—

"You are providing a fund larger than you require this year,"

and he asked me what I was going to do with the surplus. I said—

"If you do not waste it in extravagance, I hope we will have an opportunity of employing it to reduce the burdens of indirect taxation."

My own opinion—and I am supported by the right honourable Member for Bodmin—is that the good work which was commenced by Sir Robert Peel when he imposed the income tax in order to do away with the Debt has been a wise policy so far as revenue is concerned. At that time the great burden of taxation fell upon those who were less able to bear it. We have been engaged for 50 years in redressing that balance and in placing the heavier burden upon those who are more able to bear it; and if it should in the future become an issue between the two sides of the House—between the enemies of direct taxation and the opponents of indirect taxation—I do not fear the result, though I should regret the issue very much, for a more dangerous feud it would be impossible to raise in this country. I entirely agree with the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Bodmin that the lesson taught by the inquiry into the financial relations of Ireland is that a disproportionate burden of indirect taxation is a great injustice to a poor community. What is true in the case of Ireland is true of the poor communities scattered about in every part of the United Kingdom, and if we have a great and growing revenue, it is for the relief of the burden of the poorer classes of the community that our wealth ought to be distributed. We have done something in that direction, but there is still more to be done. I say there are classes of property which are still undertaxed; and, therefore, I protest against a Budget which endeavours to evade the responsibility of the great liabilities which the framers of that Budget have themselves created. We know what the result of the Division

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will be, but we on this side of the House shall have the opportunity of entering and recording an emphatic protest against a Budget which is founded upon unsound finance, and which contemplates taxation which I believe to be impolitic and unjust.

MR. GRANT LAWSON (York, N.E., Thirsk) said that when he moved the rejection of the Finance Bill of 1894, the right honourable Gentleman characterised his action as a proposal more extreme than the stopping of supplies, and yet the right honourable Gentleman was going to vote for a similar Motion now. There was only one principle involved in the matter, and that was that we should pay our fair share of the Debt of the country. If we went on paying off the Debt at the rate we were paying it off at the present time, we should have paid off the whole of it 50 years hence. Could anyone imagine a Chancellor of the Exchequer of such immaculate virtue, such a devotee of the cult of the figure 25, proposing to raise £25,000,000 for Debt purposes in 1949 in order that in 1950 there should be nothing to pay on this account? Such a proposal was ridiculous, and the only way in which the *reductio ad absurdum* could be avoided was by reducing from time to time the amount of the fixed debt charge. As to the argument of prosperity, the estimated national receipts fell short of the estimated expenditure of £2,600,000. That was the state of financial prosperity of which they heard so much. So much, then, for the argument about prosperity. He next came to the question of posterity. It was, of course, true that if we did not pay off these two millions, someone else would have to pay the money. But whose debts were they? These were the debts of our ancestors. He did not blame them for incurring them for a moment. They left a wide Empire, but they did not leave it only for us; they left it for posterity. The expenditure which rendered the reduction of the fixed charge necessary had been made in making the Empire wider quite as much for those who came after us as for ourselves. We were engaged in pegging out claims for posterity.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANT LAWSON said he was glad to find the right honourable Gentleman cheered those words. They were the words of Lord Rosebery, who was a recognised authority on such matters. It was not a hard thing that we should ask posterity to pay off some part of the mortgage left upon the estate by their ancestors. The crux of the whole matter was, Were we paying a reasonable share of the Debt that was charged upon this country? He had looked into the figures, and he found that in the last 62 years our national indebtedness had been reduced by £124,000,000, or at the rate of £2,000,000 a year. He thought the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would satisfy the country, and render it difficult for right honourable Gentlemen opposite to persuade the taxpayers of the present day that they ought to pay more than £6,000,000 a year for the sake of relieving the taxpayers of the future.

*MR. W. H. HOLLAND (Yorks, W.R., Rotherham) confessed that he was not able to share the surprise of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Poplar when he expressed astonishment that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not undertaken the reimposition of the tobacco duty, recollecting as he did that the right honourable Gentleman represented a division of Bristol, which was one of the great centres of the tobacco industry. He agreed with the honourable Member for Peckham, who laid down the proposition that either the condition of the country warranted the suspension of the Sinking Fund or it did not, but he arrived at quite the opposite conclusion, because he considered the condition of the country at the present time was not such as to warrant the suspension of that Fund. As a nation we were prosperous enough; if we were suffering from adversity there might be some justification for the reduction of the Sinking Fund. He did not wish to say anything offensive to honourable Members opposite, otherwise he should have declared unhesitatingly his opinion that this was an electioneering Budget. If the Government had paid their way during the year, then extra taxation would have been quite unavoidable, and to have imposed extra taxation would inevitably have incurred odium, and that would

never have done for a Government in quest of popularity; and that quest of popularity had been the guiding principle underlying every proposal which had emanated from the Treasury Bench. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to begrudge the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer who, in 1902, might be in a position to remit taxation largely, from which it was quite clear that he himself did not expect to be in that position in 1902, nor, indeed, did he understand that he desired to be. Honourable Gentlemen opposite had inquired what the Opposition would do if they were in their places, and they had asked, "Can you propose an alternative?" He recollected that during the last Parliament the right honourable Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Colonies intervened in one Debate, and when asked what he would do under certain circumstances, retorted that he declined to prescribe unless he was called in and paid the fees, and so a similar retort would be open to the Opposition on this occasion; yet it could be indicated that there was an open field of taxation in the existence of ground values whenever any Government chose to take up that fruitful source of revenue. He listened with great interest to the remarks of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Bodmin on the condition of trade at the present time. The right honourable Gentleman took a pessimistic view of the prospect of our national trade, and his reason for doing so was that American firms had taken orders which should have been placed in this country. He (Mr. Holland) would like to point out to the right honourable Gentleman that under certain conditions that state of things was by no means a disadvantage. It had arisen now, not because American was necessarily beating English manufacture, but because the books of British manufacturers were so very full of orders that they could not possibly undertake any additional work, so that the acceptance of those orders by American firms was not necessarily a proof that America was beating us, but rather that America was less well supplied with orders than we were. He thought that British traders on the whole were decidedly on the alert at the present time, and were

alive to any dangers which might accrue to them from foreign competition. He considered we had had an enormous advantage conferred upon us by our Free Trade principles, and he hoped that it would be a long time before any departure from those principles was made. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for Bodmin had referred in tones of anxiety to what he considered a proof of the decline of our cotton trade. He said the United States were now using more cotton than we were in this country, but that bald statement was one which was liable to mislead those who listened to it, because, although we might, as a matter of fact, use less weight of American cotton, we made a much finer class of goods out of that cotton, and in that way employed far more labour, and occupied much more machinery.

On the return of Mr. SPEAKER after the usual interval,

MR. BUTCHER (York) said that certain interesting results had arisen out of the Debate. It had brought forward certain differences of opinion, which they on that side of the House suspected, amongst honourable Members on the Opposition side. Take, for instance, the question of the difficulty of the redemption of the Debt owing to the high price at which Consols stand. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton would get over that difficulty by extending the investment of the Savings Banks Funds, while the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth looked upon that as an economic heresy. In Committee of Ways and Means the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth inveighed against the proposals of the Government for reducing the fixed Debt charge with vigour of rhetoric, and exhibited a wealth of adjectives which some of the minor critics of the Government were not disposed to imitate. On what was this superstructure of invective founded? He ventured to think it was founded on prophecy and assertion. The assertion was that, except in some extreme cases of national emergency and for temporary purposes, the fixed Debt charge should not be reduced. There was something so sacred about the present figure that it should not be reduced. What was the prophecy? It was that the

proposal of the Government to reduce the fixed Debt charge from 25 to 23 millions was certain to end in the abolition of the Sinking Fund altogether. Well, that prophecy would be much more alarming, were it not for the fact that the same prophet on a similar occasion 12 years ago uttered almost the same prophecy, and that that prophecy had been falsified by the event. The right honourable Gentleman told the First Lord of the Admiralty when he proposed to reduce the fixed Debt charge from 28 to 26 millions that that proposal was a fatal blow at any attempt to discharge the Debt. But during the 12 years since that prophecy was uttered the Debt had been reduced by 100 millions, and the Sinking Fund now stood at eight millions. The assertion or assumption that the fixed Debt charge could not be altered was entirely contrary to the expressed intention of Sir Stafford Northcote. When he proposed the charge in 1875 he said that if circumstances should alter the fixed Debt charge should be reduced. The only question now was whether the circumstances had in fact altered, and whether the moment was ripe and the occasion opportune for revising the fixed Debt charge. Well, if Sir Stafford Northcote was right the whole basis of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth was gone. He (the honourable Member for York) had made a calculation of what some of the results would be if the fixed Debt charge were kept at its present amount until 1923, and certainly the figures were rather astonishing—for the Sinking Fund in that year would be no less than 14½ millions. He asked whether the taxpayers of the country could be reasonably expected to provide—apart altogether from other taxation, which was an increasing taxation—a sum of money which would not only pay for the expenditure of the year, but 14½ millions for the purpose of paying off a debt over a century old. He was certain that if the taxpayers realised that that was what they were asked to do, they would refuse to do it, and they would be perfectly right. They might fairly ask would the virtue of the Chancellor of the Exchequer stand the strain of the temptation to deal with it? It must result in a breakdown long before 1923 arrived. But there was another result that must occur. The investment of such a sum as 14 or 15

millions in buying up Consols would long before 1923 have become an impossible transaction. More than that, in addition to those 14 or 15 millions, they would have to invest 10 millions a year on account of the Savings Banks, or a total purchase of Consols of 24 or 25 millions per annum. Now, what would be the total amount of Consols in the market at the time? It would be only 355 millions. He had calculated that keeping the fixed Debt charge at the present figure they would have paid off 205 millions in 1923, reducing the amount of Consols in the market to 105 millions. That would not, however, represent the amount of free Consols, for if the present rate of investment in Savings Banks were continued, the amount of free Consols would be only 23 millions. But, supposing the amount bought by the Savings Banks was not 10 millions but six millions, the average of the past few years, they would have 85 millions Consols free. As against that they would have to purchase in the market 14 millions in respect of the Sinking Fund and from six to 10 millions in respect of the Savings Banks. Did not these figures show that long before 1923 was reached that would be an impossible financial operation. It would be absolutely impossible to carry on the system, because they could not get Consols to buy. But the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton said that they should not continue to invest the Savings Banks Funds in Consols, but should invest that money in other securities. Be that so; but it was certain that they would have to hold 100 millions in behalf of the Savings Banks, and that would leave only 255 millions of free Consols in the market, out of which the Government would have to purchase very large sums for the Sinking Fund and the Savings Banks. Again, he said that before 1923 arrived the system would have broken down, and they would have to give up the theory for which the late Chancellor of the Exchequer had so strenuously contended—that they must keep up the fixed Debt charge at the present figure. Taking another aspect of the question, look to what money would be wasted in buying up Consols at the high premium at which they stand. Assuming that the average between 1906 and 1923 was 5 per cent. premium—in other words that the premium gradually

sank from 113 to 105, they would have the result that while 205 millions Consols were bought for the reduction of the Debt, they would be absolutely throwing away 10 millions, whereas if they had waited till 1923 they could have bought at a price 10 millions cheaper than under the present system. That fact alone showed that they must reduce the fixed Debt charge from time to time according to the circumstances of the case. Those figures satisfied him, at any rate, that the principle on which the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth held that the fixed Debt charge should be maintained without alteration could not be supported. He quite admitted that it was convenient to fix from time to time some standard of the amount that should be applicable to the redemption of the Debt, and also that the amount of the fixed Debt charge should be revised from time to time according to the circumstances of the case. But what were the circumstances which ought to be taken into consideration? The first consideration, he thought, should be that the amount devoted to the reduction of the Debt should not be unreasonably large. The taxpayers of the country would resent the imposition of fresh taxation for the purpose of paying off Debt at a rate of from eight to 15 millions a year. They must have a war chest, it was true, but was not six millions, as they would have under the new proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a sufficient war chest, when it would enable them to raise 250 millions a year without the imposition of any fresh taxation at all. There was another consideration when they came to the fixed Debt charge, and that was that they should pay some regard to the existing burdens of the people. If they found that the nation was expending vast sums of money on the Army and Navy for the purpose of insurance against war, then that fact should be taken into consideration when asked to pay a fixed amount. At the present moment they were paying 22 millions more than in the time of Sir Stafford Northcote, and that supported his argument that the circumstances had altered. Again, when Consols stood at 110, and might possibly go much higher, they should consider the question of premiums, and how soon they could pay off at par. Lastly, he held that they must consider the amount of free

Consols in the market, and the proposition it bore to the sum they wanted to spend in redeeming Debt. The general conclusion to which he had come was that they could not proceed on what he would call the crude and ill-considered assumption that they must never reduce the fixed Debt charge, but that they must, from time to time, according to the circumstances of the case, revise that amount, and have regard to many considerations, some of which he had endeavoured to enumerate. He asked the House to accept that, judged by such considerations, the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a fair and reasonable proposal. It provided a Sinking Fund of a substantial and reasonable amount, it ensured the maintenance of the Sinking Fund at a figure which could be defended as ample, and finally it offered a security for the continuance of a system which all parties desired to see continued, by which, year by year, they could set aside a large special amount for the redemption of the National Debt.

MR. R. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.) said that the Amendment of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton was not confined to the single topic of the financial expedients that were involved in the Finance Bill. He understood that it gave a wider range than that adopted by mere financial experts. He trusted that the honourable and learned Gentleman who had just sat down would not think he was wanting in respect to him if he ventured to call his very able, instructive, and interesting speech unconvincing, and if he did not attempt to follow him from an opposite financial point of view. He desired to discuss the Amendment from a point of view which had not been noticed in the Debate—the point of view of the great masses of the people of the country, although it was to a certain extent touched upon, by implication, in the great oration delivered that night by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth—a speech which would have a very great effect on the country. There was one thing which he did not think they would be able very clearly to follow. They had heard elaborate lectures from past, present, and future Chancellors of the Exchequer, but he thought the whole still appeared very

much like a Chinese puzzle. He thought that with the assistance of a "Whittaker" a man of average capacity could become *au fait* with all the financial law and erudition with which they had been so copiously belaboured; but unfortunately art was long and time was short, and the average man did not put himself to the trouble of comprehending those matters either from want of inclination or want of time or interest. But there was one thing which the average man—whether he be the black-coated or the fustian-jacketed man—could very easily take in, and that was the simple but very large fact that 121 millions sterling annually was a very considerable national expenditure, and that to add to it at the rate of 20 millions in four or five years was really doing the thing on the scale of liberality that looked risky even in the most prosperous period, and that might prove to be ruinous in those periods of depression which were perfectly certain to come some day. On the whole it looked altogether too much like an audacious endeavour at applying that famous maxim of finance, which directed them when in difficulty to "hang the expense," and he thought the people of this country were very likely to ask whether all this vast expenditure could really be necessary for their welfare, and they would certainly, in his opinion, be disposed to agree with the Amendment to this Finance Bill, even though the effect of it should be to refuse the Government the power to raise that amount of money. He knew what the Government would say. They would say that the people perfectly approved of the uses to which they were going to put the money, and that they were delighted with the Government's policy. His experience of that matter was directly the reverse. Whatever might be said to the contrary by aristocratic or military or commercial Jingoes on this subject—who, by the way, were not wanting on either side of politics in this matter—he for one, and many much better observers than he was, had not yet forgotten the Omdurman and Fashoda deliriums which were indulged in by many enthusiasts, amongst whom were certain of his own self-appointed leaders, whom he could not bring within his present range of vision, even with the assistance of the largest telescope. He scarcely believed that the Govern-

ment themselves could be of opinion that they had the confidence and hearty approval of the people in this matter. If they were satisfied that they had that approval, he thought they would go straight to them and ask the people to pay the bill which they had been compelled to run up. If they were certain that the people thought they were the splendid creatures which they gave themselves out to be, and that they were the real defenders of the people's existence, and were covering themselves with glory and filling their pockets with honourable and conscientiously acquired plunder, then they would be perfectly convinced that the people would be even willing and anxious to pay them all that was at present in demand. But the fact was that they were concealing or attempting to conceal from the people what they actually wanted to do. They knew that in equity lawyers held that concealment was generally a note of fraud, and he used the word fraud in connection with Her Majesty's Government in a strictly Parliamentary and even Pickwickian sense. The Government were undoubtedly seeking to conceal what they were doing from the ordinary observer, who could not see through the mask of financial technicalities. When the people saw the uses to which the Government were applying this large sum of money, some of them positively mischievous and evil, they would certainly condemn such a policy. They were neglecting technical education, and he did not say that some blame was not attachable to both parties in regard to this matter. It was, to a considerable extent, a question of armaments. If they went on as they were doing at present, they would not be able to maintain those armaments without resorting to the old system of the press-gang, or organising the new system of conscription in this country. Their armaments were being used for the purpose of the cruel and sanguinary conquest of other races, under the pretence of civilising them, whereas the very first step in asserting the brutal right of the strongest was a step which was an outrage upon the most elementary principles both of duty and of justice and of international morality. Under the pretext of hastening or accelerating civilisation they were, by a sort of hothouse civilisation of their own, changing these tribes into

positive monsters of dependence and backbonelessness and artificiality, and they were compelling them to support our own greed, and they were exploiting the lands which once belonged to those people. The armaments which were used in another respect were used for the defence of Colonies which proceeded to repay that kindness by shutting out their commerce by means of high tariffs. They were perpetually expending upon armaments for the defence of the Empire large sums, without any possible limit or possible end, and if they went on the time would come to pass when the Empire would entirely smother the United Kingdom under the boundless weight of its infinite self-expansion. He thought the wisest course for them to take was to diminish their Imperial responsibilities as much as they possibly could. He did not know why they should continue to adhere to the exploded economic heresy that trade followed the flag, and that it did not only follow the demand for the cheapest and the best goods. It was not only in those matters that the people of this country were scandalised by what was going on, for they saw them making ducks and drakes of the millions which they desired to be spent in other ways. They saw them throwing away the money and wasting it in what they called the pampering of the landlords, by means of eleemosynary distributions. They saw them wasting their money upon rabid, tyrannical and self-extermi-native ecclesiastical sects for the purpose of ruining national education. They saw them also giving to mendicant municipalities a regular schooling in wastefulness at the fee of £9,000,000 a year, which would possibly be an increasing sum. He had tried to state in the briefest manner what he thought was the condition of the mind of the people on the real subject matter of this Finance Bill. The great mass of the people perfectly understood the comparative operation of the direct and indirect taxation. They knew perfectly well that although direct taxation hit the rich man, it ultimately hit the poor man also, and they understood with perfect clearness that any diminution of capital was harmful to all classes, and that every shilling taken directly from the rich man had the effect of diminishing the capital of the country, and caused less to be divided among the wage-earn-

ing classes. He regarded this as a correct summary of the feeling of the masses of the people of this country in regard to the way in which the Government were dealing with the money that was taken from the pockets of the people both rich and poor. Holding those same opinions himself, he considered that it was his duty, however unpleasant it might be to have to perform it, to record his vote against the Budget proposals *in toto*, as a protest against the sort of thing that was going on, and which threatened to be continued.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said that in the few remarks which he would address to the House he would not attempt to follow the remarkable speech which they had just heard. It was certainly very full of adjectives, and it was very difficult to follow what was meant. It was simply against the Government, and that was sufficient for the honourable Member opposite. In considering this question, the Member for West Monmouth had spoken at considerable length upon the subject of increased taxation. That was a matter which concerned everybody, and which must be considered in the future. Looking at affairs as they stood, it was obvious to all that the chances were that their expenditure was not going to decrease, but rather to increase. But although that was the case he thought it was idle to say that this state of things had been brought about by the present Government. It had been brought about by a policy which the country approved of, and which was essential to the welfare and existence of this Empire. That expenditure had been brought about by foreign and domestic affairs combined. It was easy enough on a political platform to talk about an increase of many millions, but, to be fair and honest, it must be acknowledged that even in their civil expenditure the enormous increase had been in regard to the subject of education, and it was not fair to put it on the shoulders of this or any other Government, for it was a national want, because the country was growing and expanding at a great pace. As regarded the enormous increase of armaments, they all regretted that this expenditure was necessary, but they firmly believed that this great increase of expenditure was the wisest and safest way of protecting this and other

Mr. Wallace

countries from the calamities of war. He had been led to make those remarks by the speech of the honourable Gentleman who had just spoken, but he wished to refer to two other points. He desired to say a few words in regard to the proposed increase in the wine duties. He never drank wine himself, and therefore he could look at the question from an impartial standpoint. He thought this was an irritating alteration which would bring in very little money, and which would affect their intercourse with other countries in an unpleasant manner, more especially in regard to their Australian Colonies, where they had been talking about federation. He had been conversing with an Australian gentleman, who had informed him that this alteration would only produce about £20,000 from Australia, although it would do an infinite amount of mischief there, because the wine industry was being developed, and the irritation caused would be enormously out of proportion to the benefit which would accrue to the Exchequer. It did seem to him to be a pity that this Government, which prided itself so much upon its Colonial policy should go out of its way to produce this irritation for so small a result. He did hope still that this question would be altered, and that even at the last hour the Chancellor of the Exchequer would see that the settlement of this matter is very important, and that he should not produce this irritation by such a comparatively unimportant charge. The second point he desired to allude to was the Sinking Fund. He acknowledged at once that it was with great regret that he heard that the Sinking Fund was to be reduced. He was one of those who believed that it was the duty of this country in the day of their prosperity to do their utmost to reduce that Debt. From a financial point of view, in the days of their prosperity they were bound to reduce that Debt, with a view of getting rid of it altogether. He recognised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had some excuse for the action he had taken, owing to the very complicated state of affairs which existed with regard to the high price of Consols, and other complicated affairs connected with this great subject. The Member for Bodmin had given them a very interesting discourse upon the subject of Consols. He

took it for granted that the present price of Consols was the natural price, but that was a mistake; the price of Consols had been artificially raised by the fact that the Government had to buy so much every year. Unfortunately the fact that Consols had been forced up of late years had also raised the price of other securities. But he thought it was possible to so deal with them that Consols would fall to their normal value. If that was the true *bona fide* market value of Consols, very good, but he thought that it would be found, if any system could be established by the Chancellor of the Exchequer by which these enormous purchases could be stopped, Consols would fall to their natural value. That disposed of the argument that it was all the same whether they were paid off now at their present price or whether they were paid off at a lower rate. It was admitted that to pay them off at that present price was extravagant, and it was a good excuse for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to deal with them in some other way. There was one question, which was whether a larger area could not be used for investments. He saw great danger in allowing the money of the Post Office and Sinking Fund being put into other securities. Directly the State became a large holder in a particular Stock Exchange security it would raise the price of that security. It was, however, to get over that difficulty that it was suggested that Indian, Colonial, and local loans should be taken up by this fund; but taken up in such a way that the State took the whole of the stock issued at one time, so that there should be no competition with the public. He thought that such a system might tend to check the rise in the price of Consols. He believed with a reduced Sinking Fund and a reduced amount of Savings Bank money there would be an opportunity to lend money at a lower rate than at the present time. If such a system was taken advantage of in 10 or 12 years the difficulty would be got over, because by 1923 Consols should fall to their normal value. It had been suggested that the whole subject should form a topic of investigation by a Committee, but in his opinion it was a matter for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to settle. It was for him to take expert opinion, and make up his mind as to the best course to pursue. It was an impor-

tant matter, however, which he trusted would be considered very shortly. He regretted the action of the Chancellor in reducing the Sinking Fund, but did not agree with the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire that it struck at the root of the whole Fund. He did not see that it would permanently affect it. He thought that there was some excuse for the reduction, having regard to the present enormous price of Consols. But when they remembered what had been done in the earlier part of the century it could not be said that £25,000,000 a year was an excessive sum to apply to the reduction of Debt. It was not a satisfactory state of things, and he thought that at the end of the most prosperous century the country had had that they should do something to remove the incubus which had lain on them for so many years. Some alteration was necessary in the application of the Sinking Fund, and he thought if the Chancellor of the Exchequer would turn his attention to the proposals which had been made it would be a great step in advance. He regarded the postponement of the payment of Debt as the most cowardly and mean action which could be taken towards our posterity.

*SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said his knowledge on the subject of the Sinking Fund was infinitely less than the knowledge of those who had spoken upon that matter, but it appeared to him that the whole weight of the argument was against the proposals of the Government, and the general feeling of the House was summed up by the Member for East Islington, when that Gentleman regretted that "for the second time it was a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer who had reduced the Fund for the payment of the National Debt." The subject to which he wished to address the attention of the House was the wine duties, with regard to the Parliamentary and secret histories of which he had probably a wider knowledge than anyone in the House. He had been, in Mr. Gladstone's second Administration, charged by Mr. Gladstone with the subject in which Mr. Gladstone took the deepest interest, and he possessed a detailed correspondence of 1880-1885 and of 1888, in which Mr. Gladstone's views

were set forth. They were diametrically opposed to the proposals of the Government. Some speakers appeared to have fallen in with the view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it would be more convenient to discuss this matter in the Committee stage of the Bill, but his view was exactly the opposite. His only regret was that the House did not attack it more definitely on the first night of the Resolution, because unless it was attacked then no very great result could be obtained after. If there was one subject on which the Budget proposals could be attacked it was that of the wine duties, because in a former Budget of the First Lord of the Admiralty these proposals were first put to the House, and they had subsequently to be withdrawn when they came into the Bill. The subject of the wine duties was not a domestic matter only; it concerned great interests abroad with which our trade was very greatly mixed up, and the Vote ought to have been challenged at once, because in the Committee stage it would be too late to fight the question. When the Resolution was before the House he had alluded to the fact that the trade in Australian wines with this country was steadily increasing, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer contradicted that statement. He had now looked up the authorities which he thought bore out the statement he then made.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER: I referred to the total Colonial wine trade with this country. The figures of the last three years showed that that is practically at a standstill, but probably the trade of South Australia and Victoria had rather slightly increased.

***SIR C. DILKE** said that the figures to which he had referred showed that the total importation of Colonial wines into this country had increased from £428,893 in 1894, to £640,712 in 1895, to £731,000 in 1896, and to over £741,000 in 1897.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER: Read last year's figures.

***SIR C. DILKE** said they had not got last year's figures before them, so that

Sir C. Dilke.

it must be taken that the total Colonial wine trade for the last three years had been practically stationary. But there was no doubt that the Australian wine trade had increased, and was increasing still. Very similar proposals to those before the House in respect to the wine duties were made in 1888 by the right honourable Gentleman the present First Lord of the Admiralty when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, but they were withdrawn. He (Sir C. Dilke) hoped that when the First Lord of the Admiralty addressed the House, he would explain why those proposals were withdrawn, and whether the reason which necessitated their withdrawal in 1888 did not exist at the present time with regard to the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The First Lord of the Admiralty was now a party to a reversal of the policy he adopted in 1888, and he (Sir C. Dilke) wished to know why it was wise in 1899 to adopt a Measure which was in 1888 considered unwise. After the proposals had been withdrawn in 1888, Mr. Gladstone, who was by far the highest authority upon the subject of the wine duties, and who made them a special study, expressed his views in a single sentence. He said, "We were on the edge of a great national misfortune." He supposed that they would be told with regard to Mr. Gladstone, as they were told of Lord Beaconsfield, that he is dead, and that things could be done now which could not be done before; but those who held free trade views did not believe that it could be safely done. It was not as though the wine duties had always been handled as severely as at present, when the right honourable Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said he did not believe in bargaining with the wine duties. The wine duties had always been used for the purpose of bargaining with foreign countries. They were so used in 1860, 1880, and 1886, and were the subject of negotiations in 1888, and to raise the duties now without negotiating with foreign countries seemed to him to be as dangerous to the trade of the country as it was in 1888. In the case of Australia, it was equally dangerous because they had hit a growing industry at a time when, in all probability, a federal tariff was about to become an accomplished fact. It was the very worst moment which could have

been chosen for raising the wine duties, and he doubted whether, as regarded foreign powers, the moment was much better chosen. We had had political differences with them which were now drawing to an end apparently, but which had excited some exasperated feeling, and just at the moment that things were settling down, it was proposed to raise these duties. It seemed to him to be playing into the hands of the Protectionists, and if the proposal was carried out, we should run a great risk of dislocating our trade. They were met with somewhat academic arguments, but they all knew that the bulk of our French trade was affected by those duties, especially the trade with great cities like Rheims and Bordeaux. There had been a great deal of agitation recently on the subject of the sugar bounties, and it had only lately been made quite clear that those who desired to deal with this subject by countervailing duties had not got their own way. When they were trying to deal with those countries by argument, how would those opposed to them receive the new duties? The Members of this House often spoke as though all their trade was with their own possessions, and as though foreign Powers excluded our trade to such an extent as to greatly reduce its volume. Their trade with foreign Powers had been greatly increasing, and they sent £45,000,000 sterling of their own produce to the great wine-producing countries of the Continent, apart altogether from what they sent to their own Colonies. The bulk of the trade involved was so enormous and the imposition of these wine duties would be so irritating that he confessed that it seemed to be unwise for the small amount of money involved to jeopardise the trade which was of far more importance to this country than the duty. With regard to the large amount of money which had been spent in Africa by this country, he did not think they were ever likely to see that money back again, or that those districts in Africa would ever repay the amount of time which the House had bestowed upon them. Those honourable Members of the House who had consistently opposed

this policy had always taken up that line of argument. If they were unable to make the West Indies, which had a perfect soil and open sea communication, pay their way, how could they hope to make those countries in the heart of Africa, which produced the same products under more disadvantageous circumstances, a profitable undertaking? His right honourable Friend had criticised the military and naval expenditure. He confessed that for his part, supporter as he was of the increased expenditure upon the Navy, he had always believed that they could have a stronger and more effective army for a far less sum of money than was spent upon it. He knew that the Member for West Monmouthshire and the present Leader of the Opposition were of the opinion that it was impossible for the House of Commons to adequately grapple with a subject of military reform, but that was only because honourable Members would not give their minds to the question. It was, including India, which could not be excluded, a larger branch of their expenditure than that upon the Navy. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had attacked him the other day for the terms of the Notice which he had placed upon the Paper upon this question, and said that all he desired to bring before the House was that plan upon which he opposed the increase of the Army which the House had rejected. The right honourable Gentleman himself held exactly the same view, for he made a great speech on the subject at Bristol, and there was not a single word which fell from the right honourable Gentleman in that speech in regard to Army reform which he was not prepared to agree with. They should deal with this question as the greatest branch of Imperial expenditure, and demand a reform, for which there was a *prima facie* reason, for the country did not get full value for the money. Therefore this was a question which deserved the attention of the faithful guardian of the purse strings of the country, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The argument addressed to them was that this great Empire threw upon them the duty of having a highly efficient Army, but it also threw upon them the duty

of considering whether or not that Army should be organised upon a plan of their own entirely different from the German and other foreign plans which were imposed upon them by the military authorities imitating the systems which existed abroad. There were grounds for asking the Chancellor of the Exchequer, instead of deploring the large naval and military expenditure and fighting against the policy of his colleagues, whether the time had not come when he should look into the subject of Army reform, and whether they did not believe that it would be possible, by calling in technical opinion to support them, to set the seal of their approval upon some great scheme of military reform.

*CAPTAIN PRETYMAN (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said they had heard that even- ing two very remarkable speeches. There was one remark made by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Bodmin to which he should like to allude. The right honourable Gentleman said that there was a great danger of this nation, instead of living by its own industry, and by industry carried on within the boundaries of this country, becoming a nation of *rentiers* and living by lending money to other nations. What did not appear to strike him was that the course now being taken by this country was being adopted under the impulse of that very feeling. How could that difficulty be best met? Why, only by such an expansion of the Empire as had been brought about by the manner in which that money was being spent, which enabled them instead of confining themselves to the limits of these shores to deposit their money and use their brains and energy in that expanded Empire, and this was the only way in which the danger of becoming a nation of *rentiers* could be avoided. That was the most complete answer that could be given to the Member for West Monmouthshire when he objected to this large expenditure, for he must feel that it was impossible within the boundaries of Great Britain that there could possibly be room for the vast increase of population. Now, why had this question arisen on the Budget? It was because the

Sir C. Dilke.

Chancellor of the Exchequer was dealing with the fringe of this question. The attention of the House of Commons had been drawn to the creating of a difficulty by the enormous increase in what were called "gilt-edged securities." It was the difficulty of finding a safe and profitable investment within these shores that they had to deal with, and it was only by expansion that a profitable investment could be found. The expenditure of this country at the beginning of the century was in a very different position. It naturally cost them more to maintain a large Empire than a small one, and it must be evident to everybody that they were spending money not only for the protection of Great Britain, but also for the protection of the Empire of which this country was the centre. It was quite fair to argue that it was unwise for them to enter upon any such policy, but their own view was that they expected a return for that expenditure in the trade which they would do with these countries when they had been fully developed. That was where they would get the return for their present expenditure, and it was in the light of that fact that this policy must be regarded. Another statement made by the right honourable Gentleman was that the expenditure of this country had increased by no less than £19,000,000 within the term of office of the present Government. Upon paper that appeared to be the fact, but he desired to point out that when they shifted a burden from one shoulder to the other they did not necessarily increase it; and whether one part of the burden was imposed by the local authority and the other by the Chancellor of the Exchequer the burden was the same. It was not correct, therefore, to say that this policy meant an increase of the burden of taxation, and it was not right to say that the £2,000,000 taken from the Imperial Exchequer in relief of rates was an increase of taxation, for it was simply shifting it from one shoulder to the other.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I did not say that it was an increase of taxation. I said it was an increase of expenditure.

*CAPTAIN PRETYMAN said that it was expended by the local authority in lieu of money raised by themselves, and therefore it made no difference. The right honourable Gentleman would allow that a very large increase had taken place in the amount granted in aid of local taxation, although he distinctly agreed with him that it was not a satisfactory form of taxation at all. He believed that the burden upon the Imperial taxpayer in relief of local burdens was an evil, but why had the House of Commons taken that course? It was simply the choice of evils, for it was a still greater wrong when the maintenance of the poor and the keeping up of the roads was unduly borne by one class. It was a choice of evils and a temporary palliative. It was the hope of honourable Gentlemen on this side of the House and also of some honourable Members on the opposite side that when the Commission had reported it might be in their power to distribute the burden of local taxation as fairly as Imperial taxation, and if that could be done there would be no longer any need for this vicious system of applying large grants from Imperial taxation in relief of local burdens. He desired to point out that the right honourable Gentleman, in placing the actual increase at £19,000,000, had greatly overshot the mark. There was one thing which always struck him in the speeches of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire, and that was that he often referred to the extremely prosperous condition of the agricultural industry. He scarcely knew which section of the agricultural community was prosperous. It certainly was not the landlord, or the tenant, or the labourer, who had been driven into the town because he could not get a sufficient wage to live upon in the parish where he was born. The right honourable Gentleman once told him that he had had himself some experience of agriculture, and perhaps he was referring to his own experience. He believed there had been a very good season for grass in the New Forest at the present moment, but three acres and a cow there were not quite the same thing as

large areas of arable land in other parts of England. If the right honourable Gentleman would extend his rambles a little during his next holidays he would derive some additional experience if he came into his part of the country, for he would find a very different state of things in Suffolk.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I based my statement not upon my own experience, but upon three consecutive speeches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I never made any statement to the effect that agriculture was prosperous, because I know too much about the subject to assert anything of the kind.

*CAPTAIN PRETYMAN said he would leave the late and the present Chancellors of the Exchequer to settle that point between themselves. There were two other points which he wished to mention, and one of them was in regard to the death duties. The right honourable Gentleman congratulated himself upon the amount of the death duties and upon his own courage in levying them, but he desired to say that those duties were a very great and a very severe hardship upon people whose feelings were very much outraged by the very large sums which had to be paid from classes of property which were not easily turned into money. Property was treated as if it were divisible at will. The right honourable Gentleman had said that agriculture was prosperous. There was a form of agricultural ownership which was prosperous, and that was the residential value which had largely increased in this country, but the agricultural value had decreased. It was a great hardship to pay 10, 14, or 15 per cent. upon large estates for death duties when the money had to be borrowed to pay it. He would not go any further into that subject at the present moment, although there were many honourable Members who felt that some reasonable amendment of the death duties might be made. He did not ask for anything very large, but the points of extreme

hardship might be remedied. With regard to the proportion of direct and indirect taxation contributed by the two great classes in the State, there was one important factor which was not always borne in mind. It had been generally allowed that the proportion of the actual payment of taxes should be about half to each of the two great sections of the community. It had been accepted as a principle that indirect taxation fell upon what he might call the poorer class, and that direct taxation fell upon a class who were better able to bear it. It should be remembered, however, that the poor classes in this country who paid the indirect taxation received back again in absolute coin of the realm a large proportion of the taxes which they paid in that manner. It might be fairly stated that almost the entire amount of the Education Vote went directly into their pockets, although it was also, no doubt, indirectly a benefit to the entire community. It was certainly a fact that the £11,000,000, or £12,000,000 which was spent upon education went directly into the pockets of the poorer classes of this country. There was another item which seemed to have escaped notice altogether, and that was in regard to the cheap loaf, which was not quite so cheap as was generally supposed by those who discussed this question. There was an item in their expenditure which they had to bear and which was distinctly necessary in order to maintain the cheap loaf, and that was the great cost of their Navy. He thought it was fair to say that at least half the cost of the Navy, namely, about £13,000,000, was necessitated by the absolute necessity for maintaining the cheap loaf and the supply of food which enabled that loaf to be cheap. Consequently it might be said that at least half the cost of the Navy went direct into the pockets of the poorer classes in cheapening their food. Half, therefore of the £50,000,000 paid by indirect taxation went directly back into the pockets of the working-classes of the country. That being so, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was justified in thinking that direct taxation was at present, at least, as high as was equitable, and that any further increase could only be looked upon as a most valuable

reserve which should not be exhausted in time of peace, but should remain to be drawn upon in time of extreme national necessity. What the right honourable Gentleman said was that he did not want to milk the cow when the country was not thirsty, but that he intended to reserve the milk. One remark of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire struck him very much. He said that the present Administration and the last Conservative and Unionist Administration were on the crest of the wave, and that his own Administration was in the trough of the sea. Did it strike him there was any reason for that? He thought it rather a peculiar coincidence, that when a Conservative and Unionist Government were in power they should be on the crest of the wave as regards prosperity. The explanation was that the methods and language used by the right honourable Gentleman and his friends induced capitalists to believe that direct taxation would be so increased if the Opposition obtained office that security could not be found for capital. The right honourable Gentleman no doubt thought that that was a class of argument heard on Conservative platforms, but there were things said on Conservative platforms which were true. They were entitled to call the attention of the House to the fact that there was a distinct loss of confidence among capitalists and employers when they felt that methods of taxation might be employed which would endanger and interfere with the conduct of the industries with which they were engaged. Though no doubt the feeling obtained most strongly on both sides of the House that it was undesirable to reduce the amount now paid for the reduction of the National Debt, yet he believed that when all the difficulties that had to be met were taken into consideration, and when attention was called to the fact that no alternative policy had been suggested, the House was generally of opinion that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had followed a course which was both wise and statesmanlike, and which would commend itself to the country.

Mr. CLANCY said that the reason he did not intend to move his Amendment

was that he could not do so. He might, however, discuss the subject on the Amendment before the House, but the subject was too serious, in his opinion, to be introduced at the fag-end of a two days' Debate, and he would not take the responsibility of putting it in that position. At the same time he wished the Government and the House to understand that the discussion on the subject had merely been postponed. The Irish people believed, rightly or wrongly, that they had a serious grievance, and that their case had been established by a Royal Commission. They believed also that it was not to be met by the petty-fogging devices of Parliamentary Debate or by the fallacies expressed again and again, and he regretted he must say by gross and palpable misrepresentation. That being so, the Irish people would not submit to have the question burked, either in that or any other Session, until it was redressed. He was not himself a firm believer in set Debates in that House, and he had never known an Irish grievance to be redressed by long speeches, however able. In his opinion Parliament would have to be moved in that matter by other ways and other means, and he hoped that, until the Government gave way, it would not hear the end of the subject.

MR. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): I rise in a spirit of deep humility to address the House upon the question of the Budget, because after what I have heard from the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Monmouthshire I know I am held by him—I wonder whether I am so held by his colleagues or by those who were his colleagues—to be the worst finance Minister possible. But I shall venture very humbly to reply in some measure to the right honourable Gentleman. I shall have to remind him of some incidents which I am perfectly willing shall be regarded as tests as to the rival claims of the right honourable Gentleman and myself. I hope I shall be excused these personal allusions, because honourable Members may have noticed that whatever Budget, whatever financial subject comes up, owing to some unfortunate financial antipathy the right hon-

ourable Gentleman cannot make a speech without alluding to me, though it is now 12 years since I had the honour to fill the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Now, the right honourable Gentleman gave us a most interesting review of the four years through which we have passed, and he said that at the beginning of the present Administration he left us a solvent estate which we had now reduced to a state almost of insolvency. Well, we are paying off £7,000,000 or £8,000,000 of Debt. That is a curious instance of insolvency. We are doing more as regards paying Debt than any other nation in Europe is doing or has thought of doing, but the right honourable Gentleman, with that splendid exaggeration of which he is a past-master, and which he introduces into all his speeches, says we are on the verge of financial insolvency. He says he left us a solvent estate; but there were some liabilities attaching to the estate he left us; and though the right honourable Gentleman has gazetted himself out of the firm, he still remains responsible, and he will, I hope, stand by the liabilities of the firm he has left. I do not know whether the right honourable Gentleman remembers that when, I think, he sat as Leader of the House upon this Bench, a statement was made by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs with regard to the Nile. If so, does he stand by the declarations which were made by the Under-Secretary of the Government of which he was a Member? If so, how can he denounce that portion of our expenditure which has been incurred in redeeming the pledges made by the Government of which he was a Member? It is all very well for the right honourable Gentleman to stand up now and point to what we have done during the last four years. For a portion of that he is responsible, for a portion of that his friends are responsible, and I am glad to say that to a great portion of that to which the right honourable Gentleman objects the majority of those who are sitting around him do not object, but have supported the Government in respect of it. My right honourable Friend the Member for Bodmin spoke of the attitude which has been taken by some noble Lords and right

honourable Gentlemen opposite during the last four years. He objected to that attitude, and thought that it had been rather contrary to the interests and prestige of the country and the peace of the world. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for Monmouthshire proceeded to review the finance, and began by speaking of the revenue. A fallacy which ran through a great portion of his speech was that high taxation means prosperity. A form in which the right honourable Gentleman might well put his conjectures is that the more you plunder a class, and, therefore, show what that class can pay, the more prosperous that class is. Throughout these Debates the fact of the high revenue has been cited as a proof of prosperity. So far as that high revenue is the result of larger returns from the same taxes it is a sign of prosperity, but, so far as it results from an increase of the taxes themselves, and it is to that mainly that the increase of revenue has been due, it is not a sign of increase of prosperity; it is a sign that you can get more, that you have got more revenue, but that you have laid a greater burden on the people. To say that an 8d. income-tax, and the receipt, therefore, of £18,000,000, instead of £4,000,000, from income-tax is a proof of prosperity is a proposition which I think no sensible man would possibly assent to. Let us look at this from the point of view of the professional man. He is told by the right honourable Gentleman opposite, and by many others, that the country is so prosperous that there should be no hesitation in increasing the income-tax, which is direct taxation, that we are so prosperous that we must continue to pay off Debt to the full extent. The professional class may say they are now paying 8d. in the pound income-tax instead of 2d., as in Sir S. Northcote's time, but this does not prove the increased prosperity of the country. In the comparisons that have been made the amount of revenue has been compared with that levied before irrespective of the increase of taxation. The taxation per head now is greater than at the beginning of the reign and greater than in 1875, when Sir S. Northcote arranged the Sinking Fund. Therefore we cannot

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lock upon the situation as justifying those extreme measures and rigid purity which the right honourable Gentleman opposite affects, and they cannot be based entirely on the prosperity of the country. The right honourable Gentleman passed from the revenue of the country and approached the expenditure, and here he revelled in his totals, and the more he did so the more powerful his speech was. The right honourable Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean spoke of the power of the right honourable Gentleman's speech. But the right honourable Gentleman never condescends to details, and we never can get him with regard to naval expenditure to move a reduction. He speaks of £90,000,000, and gives the impression that the whole of our expenditure is a crime, and denounces it accordingly. The amounts given under the Agricultural Rating and Voluntary Schools Acts are in the main the two crimes against which the right honourable Gentleman declaims. But the country determined that relief should be given under those Acts. It was in all our election addresses, and we have redeemed our pledges. If we had not redeemed our pledges the right honourable Gentleman would have been as magnificent in denouncing us as he has been grandiloquent because we have fulfilled them. He says the concessions under those two Acts were made to a favoured few. Are 3,000,000 agricultural labourers a favoured few? I call it a considerable portion of the population of the country, and a very important portion. But the right honourable Gentleman says it is really a dole to the landlords. If so, have the landlords got it? Have rents been raised in consequence of the Agricultural Rating Act? If rents have not been raised, the right honourable Gentleman will perhaps admit that, so far, the agricultural ratepayer, the farmer, has had the advantage of the Act. We have given the money to the favoured few. It is a libel. The favoured few have not received the money. It was not intended that the favoured few should receive it. It has gone to the agricultural ratepayer. If he has not got it, who has? If rents have been raised, in

what county is it, in what area? If there has been no general raising of rents, this relief has gone to those for whom it was intended. But Gentlemen opposite will return to their platforms, and we shall hear the same story over again. I would refer the right honourable Gentleman opposite to his colleague the right honourable Member for Wolverhampton. I wonder whether he thinks this has gone to the ratepayers or the landlords? I think he will say it has gone to the ratepayers, because, he said, "the same advantages would be claimed for the urban ratepayer." If he speaks of some relief to urban ratepayers, it is clear he does not mean urban landlords, and I should have thought the right honourable Member for Monmouth would have referred to his right honourable Friend the Member for Wolverhampton for a statement of into whose pocket the relief has gone. Then the next point upon which the right honourable Gentleman was so eloquent was the grant to Voluntary schools, and there again, I presume, he would have us believe the relief has gone to the favoured few. But here, I think, the right honourable Gentleman looks at the matter rather from the point of view of the politician than that of the financier. If we had not given the grant to the Voluntary schools to save them from extinction, does the right honourable Gentleman not see that a great burden would have to be laid on the taxpayers of the country? Does the right honourable Gentleman not see it would have been necessary to purchase at great expense nearly all the Voluntary schools, that we should have been obliged in many ways from the ratepayers or from the taxpayers to find the money? Therefore, as regards this class of the subject, I cannot admit that the right honourable Gentleman is an orthodox financier. In many respects he is the high priest of financial purity; but when you strip him of his vestments, you find an astute electioneer underneath them. I now come to other expenditure. I have carefully analysed these 19 millions of which the right honourable Gentleman speaks, I have spoken of the two millions to agricultural ratepayers, and there was, I think, about £635,000 to save Voluntary schools from

extinction and the ratepayers and taxpayers of the country from the enormous burden which would have to be placed upon them if they had to supply the place of voluntary subscriptions. It is no good for the right honourable Gentleman, if he wishes his speeches to have permanent effect—an immediate effect, I admit, he secures by his impressive and charming manner—but if he wishes to make a permanent impression, he ought to go a little more into details, or else he may mislead the country, which, I am sure, is the last thing the right honourable Gentleman would desire. Apart from the question of the grant which has been given to Voluntary schools, there is an increase in the education service of £1,220,000, and, of course, the right honourable Gentleman does not object to that? The Post Office service and the collection of taxes together account for £2,400,000, and had the right honourable Gentleman been in office the increase would have been precisely the same. In miscellaneous Civil Service charges there is nearly £300,000, and for that increase I think both sides of the House are equally responsible. Inspection and every kind of watchfulness over the interests of the people at large are, I think, responsible for that. These are large items, and the controversial items, apart from the Army and Navy expenditure, amount to about four millions, including £700,000 or £800,000 for colonial and foreign services. I think about £760,000 has been spent on Uganda and West Africa, and it is about four millions out of the 19 which are discussable apart from the Army and Navy. Well, then, I come to the Army and Navy, and there I would wish to know a little more of the opinion of the right honourable Gentleman. It is mixed up with 19 millions, but I do not know that he has ever given a vote against the expenditure. I do not know that he really believes we are spending too much. I think he does, but we have not had any public pronouncement to that effect. We have no doubt increased the expenditure of the Army and Navy. Have we had any *quid pro quo* for that increased expenditure? Have we been obliged to make it by pressure which has come not from one side of the House only, but from

both sides of the House? I will examine that presently, but let me remind the House of the comparison which has been made in the course of this Debate between the Penjdeh incident and the Fashoda incident. The Penjdeh incident cost the country 11 millions, and a scare. Our naval expenditure has not cost the country that amount, because it is all represented by that upon which it was spent. It was not frittered away as a great portion of the 11 millions was necessarily frittered away. We have our *quid pro quo*. We have had our increased expenditure, and no scare. We have increased expenditure, and a result upon which the right honourable Gentleman has generously congratulated the Government and Lord Salisbury. If we have been able to make these satisfactory settlements in different parts of Europe and the globe, we can look back with equanimity upon the expenditure which put us in a position to defend our rights, not for aggression, for aggression was never intended, but for the defence of our rights. Does the country grudge the expenditure which produced that result. As the right honourable Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said of himself, I do not know what is going on in the mind of the right honourable Gentleman, but as I have had a longer experience of the Chancellor of the Exchequer than my right honourable Friend, perhaps I have a better judgment than my right honourable Friend, and know more what is taking place in his brain. I think that he thought that we have gone too far, and that it would have been better if we had not spent this money. But what has the Navy been called upon to do, not only by those whom the right honourable Gentleman loves to call pseudo Imperialists and Jingoës, but by many of his own supporters; by many of those who sit behind him, and are mixed up in that confusion of schools of thought—I will not say Parties—which exist among the honourable Gentlemen who sit upon that side of the House. Does the House remember that considerable expense was incurred with regard to Crete? I think honourable Members opposite were as responsible as anyone in this House for that expenditure of that year, and those two years' labour

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ended satisfactorily by the action of the British Admiral there, Admiral Noel. They share that responsibility—I say it to their credit, and not to their discredit—they called upon us, at all events, to take action. I do not know whether the right honourable Gentleman was amongst them, because I am not sure how far he goes in that direction even with his most humanitarian friends. But at all events, it will be admitted that a great number of honourable Gentlemen opposite supported us in the necessary expenditure which we incurred for the pacification of Crete, and by which we have removed one of the elements of danger in the Near East. Then there is China. A great deal of naval money has been spent on China. I do not know whether honourable Gentlemen opposite did not press us very hardly with regard to what was going on in China as well as our own friends. I think they would have been very much disappointed if they had found that the British Fleet in Eastern waters was not so strong a fleet as would be necessary for maintaining that position which now, I am glad to say, has ended in a peaceful arrangement with Russia. Then Fashoda. I was interested to hear the right honourable Gentleman—not in so many words, but by inference—denounce the operations in the Soudan. He spoke of deserts. I think perhaps the recollection of Sir Edward Grey's—I mean the late Under Secretary—declaration passed over the mind of the right honourable Gentleman, but he will not deny that the country thought it was necessary that we should take the action that we did take. If he did not think so, he is in opposition to a great number of the honourable Gentlemen who sit upon that side of the House. As I listened to the right honourable Gentleman's speech, I confess I wondered what proportion—I do not mean in length, but in power and sustained interest—was not directed towards a different school of thought as regards Foreign Policy among his own friends rather than against the Government. No one could listen to the right honourable Gentleman without seeing a certain amount of emphasis put upon the cleavage between the two schools of thought. I hope I am not saying anything offensive in the

lease degree because I call them schools of thought and not political Parties. I wish to divest what I say of any personal character, but the cleavage exists, though both Parties—both schools of thought—unite in opposing this Budget on the Second Reading. The right honourable Gentleman unites the Party on the ground of a review of the last four years, and yet in that review a great many of those who sit upon that side and the majority of those on this, disagree with him. There are two more causes of expenditure due to the Army and the Navy which have happened during those four years for which Her Majesty's Government are responsible. One is connected with the Cape, and the other is connected with West Africa. The expenditure connected with West Africa has not been thrown away, and it will not be thrown away. We have made a settlement with our neighbours the French satisfactory to both nations, and which at the same time enables us to open up most important districts. Then with regard to the Cape. I do not know what honourable Gentlemen and right honourable Gentlemen opposite think; but I venture to say there is scarcely a man on that Front Bench, except, perhaps, at the extreme right, who would not be prepared to say that he endorsed the action that we have taken at the Cape to guard our interests and to see that that most vital portion of the possessions of the Crown should not in any way be jeopardised. I hope the House will forgive me for having gone into details in these matters. I have gone into details with regard to the expenditure, and I have gone into details with regard to the policy which has necessitated this expenditure. It would indeed be a great satisfaction to the Government, after all their efforts in these directions, if in the future, the near future, the example which has been now set by these arrangements that have been made, and the better feeling which is now established in consequence with foreign nations, might lead to a diminution of those armaments which hitherto have been necessary, and the expenditure on which has not been unfruitful. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that it will be considered that

the speech of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire justified me in the references which I have made to these matters in defence of Her Majesty's Government. I turn now to the other part of the right honourable Gentleman's speech, and the speeches of other honourable Gentlemen who have dealt with that action in the Budget which has mainly stimulated opposition. I do not refer now to the wine or stamp duties, but to the suspension of the Sinking Fund. There I do not blame the right honourable Gentleman, who perfectly fairly made me the scapegoat, because it was I who in 1887 took the first step and took £2,000,000 from the Sinking Fund—diverted £2,000,000 from the amount devoted to the repayment of the National Debt. I am glad of the opportunity which that gives me, because in one sense it throws light upon the present action of Her Majesty's Government, and it will show how it sustains the argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it was not simply in order to provide for the deficit that he has taken the step of taking £2,000,000 from the amount provided for the repayment of the National Debt. When £2,000,000, upon my proposition, were taken from the amount set aside for the reduction of the National Debt in 1887 I urged it upon two grounds; one ground is practically the same as that now urged by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and which has been derided by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire, and which I can understand being derided, although the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer shows the extreme injustice of that derision. I used the argument that the Sinking Fund could be touched and £2,000,000 be taken from it without compromising the existence of the Sinking Fund. The speeches of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire and the honourable Gentlemen who supported him were precisely the same as they are now. They said all chance of going on paying off the National Debt would be lost. That shows what false prophets they are, for we have been paying off the National Debt since

that time to the extent of £17,000,000 a year. In the 12 years which have elapsed since the time when the prediction was made we have paid off more Debt than we paid off in the 12 years previous to that time, and yet the right honourable Gentleman thinks he is a true prophet. The right honourable Gentleman is very fond of little proverbs and copybook sayings, the chief of which is, "Self-praise is no recommendation." That is the proverb, the saying upon which he has always acted; but, Mr. Speaker, there is one phrase which I would venture to recommend to him in which there is some little truth, and that is, "If you overdo a thing, you may underdo it." That is the proposition which underlies the attack in the speeches of to-night. They do not admit underdoing it. The action I took in 1887 has not compromised the safety of the Sinking Fund, and we have gone on reducing the Debt. The feeling that we should and ought to go on paying the Debt is just as strong in this House now as it was in the House then. That cannot be denied. That action did not then compromise the Sinking Fund, or constitute any real danger to it, nor will what we are doing now constitute any real danger to the Sinking Fund, as is now suggested. I have no doubt when the Party opposite hold political power their whole political power will be thrown into the scale to defend the Sinking Fund and it will be established again in full force. That is one argument I used. The other argument is one I am anxious to lay before the House, and even at this late hour I ask the House to follow me in regard to the argument that I am now going to use. It is an old-fashioned argument perhaps, but I can assure the right honourable Gentleman opposite that it is an orthodox argument. It is an argument drawn from the school of Mr. Gladstone, and, if he accepts some of his propositions, I hope he will accept some of those which were deeply engrafted on the mind of Mr. Gladstone as regards finance. It related to the income tax. Mr. Gladstone looked upon the income tax, not as the right honourable Gentleman and his Radical friends at the present day do—as a means by which you can avoid any increase upon indirect

taxation—not from the narrow point of view as between classes as the right honourable Gentleman has been studying and elucidating it to-night, but he looked upon the income tax as a great engine of power, as a reserve to be used and as having as important a use as the Sinking Fund itself. Every penny of the income tax represents £2,000,000. I was educated in that school, and I thought in 1887, as I think now, that to maintain the income tax at 8d. in the pound in time of peace is straining your resources for time of war. The right honourable Gentleman, in his Budgets, has, on two occasions, put on a penny to the income tax. He found it at 6d. and he put it to 7d. He found it at 7d. and he put it to 8d. As I think I remarked at the time, you simply put a penny in the slot and out would come £2,000,000. That was the finance of the right honourable Gentleman, but it was not the kind of finance that Mr. Gladstone would have approved according to the doctrines he held. Let me ask honourable Gentlemen opposite to carry their minds back to the year 1874. What did Mr. Gladstone propose? He proposed the total abolition of the income tax. Now honourable and right honourable Gentlemen opposite think they will denounce us and hold us up to the obloquy of the people if we resist in any way a further imposition of the income tax. So far as I am concerned, I say frankly that my objection to the retention of the income tax at 8d., certainly to increase the income tax from 8d. to 9d., is not an objection to its being a direct tax and not an indirect tax, but it is as weakening the one tax which, like the Sinking Fund, would be the one by which we could suddenly raise in time of war such sums as might be needful to carry on operations during a war. That is the point of view I take as regards the income tax, and from that point of view I think it would have been absurd if in his Budget, in time of peace, the income tax had been raised from 8d. to 9d. not only on account of the inconvenience it might cause to the few—the favoured few, perhaps, in the view of the right honourable Gentleman opposite—but because we should have made

a further inroad on what I look upon as one of the chief resources of the financial strength of the country. I know this was the opinion of Mr. Gladstone—you have weakened your income tax by its height.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Will the right honourable Gentleman excuse me? As he has referred to my putting 1d. on the income tax in 1886, and has gone back to Mr. Gladstone's principles, I should like to remind him that at that time Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister.

MR. GOSCHEN: That may be, but that does not alter in the slightest degree what I said about the orthodox view of Mr. Gladstone. It may have changed in 1886, but Mr. Gladstone had a very long career, and during that long career one of his great points had been to preserve the income tax for time of war. Perhaps what happened was this. The right honourable Gentleman looked at Mr. Gladstone and said, "I can find no other way of raising £2,000,000, let me put on the income tax," and I expect that is what happened. And I will tell the right honourable Gentleman why. The right honourable Gentleman shall go into the witness box himself. In April, 1886, I think it was, he said, "I know of no class or interest that would bear an increased burden." If he used such language to Mr. Gladstone, the right honourable Gentleman being Chancellor of the Exchequer, I am not surprised that Mr. Gladstone ultimately assented to 1d. being put on the income tax. But the fact remains that in 1874 Mr. Gladstone proposed the abolition of the income tax altogether, and I claim, though the right honourable Gentleman was associated with Mr. Gladstone in his later years, that I have an equal insight into what was the view of the right honourable Gentleman over a considerable period of time. Well I have given these two reasons for my action in 1887; one reason being that you must not overdo it because you might undo it; and the other, and the chief reason, being the income tax. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth said I did it for the

sake of popularity. I am not in the habit of doing things for the sake of popularity. I will not accuse him of doing anything for the sake of popularity, but I can assure him, as he has done his best, according to his lights, to strengthen the finance of the country, so I believed I was doing my best, according to my lights, in 1887, to strengthen the finance of the country by the course I took. That was my conscientious belief, and it is equally untrue what was suggested by the right honourable Member for Wolverhampton last night, on the authority of Lord Randolph Churchill, or, rather, not on his authority. Lord Randolph Churchill said he suspected I had taken that course in consequence of pressure from my Conservative colleagues. It was absolutely incorrect. Of course, it was only surmise; he had left the Government and did not know what passed. My Conservative colleagues would have been too generous to put pressure on a new-comer to renounce any financial views he held on joining them, and the new-comer would, perhaps, have been too firm to yield up those views. See how this case I have mentioned bears upon the present situation. At that time the right honourable Member for West Monmouth knows it was not only my view, but it was the Treasury view, that it was a sound piece of work. We do not quote heads of Departments in this House. The right honourable Gentleman, however, introduced the subject himself—not to-night but on previous occasions—and regretted that the Treasury had changed its views. The Treasury took that view in 1887, the Treasury take that view in 1899, and the House will therefore see how erroneous it would be to put upon my right honourable Friend the view that it was simply a cowardly way of meeting the deficiency that induced him to take the step he has taken. He has assured the House that two years ago he had this matter in view. It has been in view constantly in the Treasury, and it has been developed this year. There may be two views with regard to it, but it is not poltroonery, it is not the fear of facing the country and asking it to pay for that expenditure we have incurred, but a genuine belief that what he has

done is financially sound, that has induced the Government to assent to the proposals of my right honourable Friend. Might I be permitted to say one word with reference to the conversion to which allusion has been made to-night? It is said that my right honourable Friend and myself—I being the original robber and the Chancellor of the Exchequer the succeeding robber—have taken away altogether from the amount set aside to pay the National Debt £5,000,000, if this proposal should pass into Act—namely, £2,000,000 in 1887, £1,000,000 in 1889, and the £2,000,000 proposed now. But out of that £5,000,000, the sum of £2,600,000 represents the reduction in the interest on the National Debt. There is £2,600,000 of interest saved. I am not sure whether the right honourable Gentleman has ever thoroughly realised that point. I do not know whether he has ever realised that the conversion which it was my good fortune to be able to achieve has relieved the country of the payment of £2,600,000.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Will relieve it.

MR. GOSCHEN: Practically it has done it. You see it in the price of Consols, in the credit of the country, and in every way, because the result of that conversion has been in the interest of the country far beyond this £2,600,000 which has been saved. But the right honourable Gentleman, for some unexplained reason, has never been able to approve of that conversion. His great Leader, Mr. Gladstone, on the contrary, has always in the most generous manner admitted, may I say, the greatness of the achievement. But the right honourable Gentleman has never been able to force himself to say one word in its favour. The only action he has taken with reference to it has been to taunt me at the time with the fall in Consols, as he actually reminded the House a few nights ago, and to point out that the whole of that interest ought to go into the amount set aside for the payment of National Debt. I do not know whether the right honourable Gentleman knows exactly and can calculate what £2,000,000 of

a Sinking Fund means as regards the amount that you can borrow upon it. That is a calculation which has often been put before the House, but I have never dwelt upon it previously. I have let the story tell its own tale; but when time after time the right honourable Gentleman denounces me and speaks of me as the worst of financiers he knows, perhaps I may be pardoned for reminding the House that £2,600,000 is the equivalent to the cancellation of £100,000,000 of Debt. Consols fell some time after I had proposed the conversion. That was not unnatural. But what did the right honourable Gentleman do? He said, "What do the Consol-holders think of this?" He endeavoured, in fact, to set the Consol-holders against the bargain I had made, which was too favourable to the country and against them. Let me say this on the issue between myself and the right honourable Gentleman. I have set my conversion of the Debt against his Finance Act, and I am content to leave the judgment to posterity. Besides the effects I have mentioned the conversion of the Debt had the general effect that the rate of interest both in this country and elsewhere fell, and I believe it is through the reduction of the rate of interest on Government stocks that corporations and sanitary authorities can borrow more cheaply, and in that way I maintain that the conversion of the Debt has assisted borrowers in every part of the kingdom. I am sure that if the right honourable Gentleman and his Party had accomplished that conversion it would have been said that it was a great democratic Measure by which capital had been cheapened, by which traders had been able to borrow on cheaper terms, and by which the people generally had been benefited. The conversion of the Debt had one other effect. The right honourable Gentleman, as I have said, emphasised the temporary fall of Consols at the time. But why did they fall? Because, naturally, the rate of interest having been reduced on the Consols held by the people, the people sought other investments. I had to pay off £40,000,000

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of Consols; that money went into other securities; and there was, as a consequence, a temporary fall in the price of Consols. But ultimately the conversion justified itself even in that respect, for Consols soon went up to par, and now they are at a rate far higher than I or anybody else expected at the time. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for Bodmin spoke of the difficulties of paying off Consols at the present high rate of interest, being practically higher than the rate of interest which was current at the present moment. My right honourable Friend's argument about the 10 per cent. was this—that it was no loss paying the 10 per cent. because we would save our interest during the next 20 years. I think the right honourable Gentleman is mistaken in that. No banker would advance money on such terms in order to secure against a $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. during 20 years. The right honourable Gentleman also dealt with the question of paying off Consols in 1923. This is a point which is of some historical interest, though I would not feel justified in introducing it at this late hour except to show the great difficulty of conversion. You had under the old system to give a year's notice before you could pay off the Consols. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would not dare, face to face with a twelvemonth's notice, to pay off 500 millions, and therefore I introduced the new arrangement of the stock, so that when 1923 comes you will be entitled to pay off Consols in any amounts, on any notice, and in any manner the Treasury would desire. We secured to the taxpayers that if we have only 50 millions or 10 millions we can pay them off. We shall not be faced with the necessity of paying off 500 millions with a year's notice. That is the advantage which we shall have, and Consols can scarcely be above par in 1923. But for that they would be above par. It would be possible, no doubt, for the holders to say, "The country cannot find £400,000,000 or

£500,000,000, and we shall hold out." The Measure which I was fortunate enough to be able to pass has deprived the Consol-holders of that terrible power, and when the time comes the Chancellor of the Exchequer at that time—Heaven knows whom he will be; I hope it will be some talented and comparatively young Member of this House—will be able to deal with this question at his discretion, and get such a reduction of interest as he may be able to exact. But who knows what the cost of interest will be during the next 20 years. We talk now as if it was certain that the present state of credit will continue to exist. Let me make one remark about the credit of the country. While it is deplorable from the point of view of having to pay off the Debt, I do not agree with my right honourable Friend the Member for Bodmin in this respect. While it is deplorable that we have to pay a premium of 10 per cent., let us rejoice that the Consols of this country stand at 110, giving a measure of credit, of power, and of resource financially to this country which, I think, has never been shown before. There is a desire to substitute in the Savings Banks other securities for Consols. I hope it will not be carried too far. There I agree with my constant opponent, the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth. The House has not sufficiently grasped the fact that Consols are the one stock which is always saleable in all circumstances, and that you may get Indian securities or municipal corporation stock, you may get the safest stock in the world, but in a time of crisis they will not be available. That is why Consols in our operations of buying at a great pace may be forced up, because banks, foreigners, and other persons will hold them in all circumstances because they are the one stock that is realisable. And I hope that we shall never be such bad bankers as a State that we shall not hold sufficient of that stock, which is always saleable, to enable us to meet any crisis that may occur. I tremble when I hear it said that we have got the key of the

Savings Banks' money. That key is in the hands of Parliament. I hope Parliament will stand pretty firmly in holding that key, and will not give the Government too much opportunity of using and diverting, I may almost say, the Savings Banks' money to any purposes which would weaken that great reserve which it constitutes, and which would strike a blow at Consols. I must leave, I fear, to the Committee stage the discussion of the wine duties and many other interesting points which have been raised in this discussion. There is only one more point with which I will deal very briefly, and that is the final subject which was treated by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth—namely, the case of direct and indirect taxation. He taxed my right honourable Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer with putting forward views and statements which were very far from his mind. He was putting a hypothetical case to the Opposition, and with that skill which is always exercised by the right honourable Gentleman, he put it as if it were an enunciation of his own theory on the question of direct and indirect taxation. The right honourable Gentleman dealt with that question to-night briefly, but very significantly. He thought that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had pinned himself to theories of direct taxation, which meant that we should in no circumstances increase indirect taxation; we should put it on direct taxation. If I were to inquire I should probably find that my views on indirect taxation differ from those of the right honourable Gentleman. I should like to know, does he count beer as indirect or direct taxation? The right honourable Gentleman prudently does not answer. I will tell you why. I will show the methods of the right hopourable Gentleman. When we are in power and when he wishes us to tax the brewers then it is a direct tax; and when he urges us to impose it on the brewers then it is not paid at all by the working classes. But when he comes to add up the whole system of indirect

taxation I have observed that every shilling of the beer duty is included in indirect taxation which is paid by the working classes. It is just on a par with the agricultural rate; sometimes it is on the landlord, sometimes it is on the rate-payers, according as it suits the argument. Sometimes it is "Put it on the brewers," at other times it is "Look at this gigantic tax which is being paid by the consumers of beer." But I warn the right honourable Gentleman that when he addresses his fervent orations on the platform as regards the iniquity of the Conservative Party, taxing them with that which they are not going to do with reference to direct taxation, he may be asked for some explanation of his views with regard to beer and brewers. My right honourable Friend the Member for Bodmin spoke of the danger of bringing antagonism into this House between direct and indirect taxation. The right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire did his utmost, from a passing phrase of my right honourable Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to initiate that discussion and give it all the importance—I might say all the virulence—of which it was capable. He began by speaking in a comparatively calm manner—not very calm, but comparatively calm—but as he became more animated he turned his back upon us, as he often does when he wishes on special occasions to suggest an electoral cry—he turned his back upon us, speaking to the honourable Members behind, and said, This is the important thing, that there ought never to be a controversy between direct and indirect taxation. Well, the right honourable Gentleman, I say, wished to give virulence to that discussion. We will not follow him on those lines, we will not follow him on the lines of discussing upon a question like this what are the precise payments which are to be made by direct and indirect taxation. It does not arise on this Budget, or on anything connected with this Budget, unless, indeed, honourable Members opposite are

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terribly disappointed that we did not put a penny on the income tax, an event to which I believe they looked forward with the greatest possible pleasure. The right honourable Gentleman and honourable Members have been very severe upon our Budget; they believe that we have struck a blow at the Sinking Fund from which it can never recover; that we have introduced a Measure which will endanger the finance of the country. Let me make a suggestion to them; let them fight the next General Election upon the question of the increase of the Sinking Fund and the withdrawal from the agricultural ratepayers of the money which has been granted to them at the end of the five years; let them in that way replace the two millions now withdrawn. Right honourable Gentlemen opposite have said that this ought to be a temporary suspension. Let them make it a temporary suspension. Perhaps they will be in office three years hence, or two years hence—Heaven knows when they will be in office, nor can we tell which school of thought at that time will be the determining body in the operations which will take place. But this I will say—that the unanimity with which the leaders, and followers, and independents, and every class of honourable Members opposite have united in support of the Sinking Fund and against the proposal of the

Government makes it an easy and a certain thing that they will restore the two millions to the country, so that the amount may be 25 millions when they come into office. Now that is a fair offer to make them; and then that damage which they say, with that gross exaggeration which has characterised the whole of this Debate, has been done will be undone, and once more, possibly with Consols rising to 115 or 120, with a new Sinking Fund rising from nine to 10 or 11 millions, they will be able to discharge the Debt of the country in a manner which they will think worthy of its dignity. They can find the money either by withdrawing the relief to the agricultural ratepayers, or, if it should happen that the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire is still influencing to a great extent the Party, or the general assembly of honourable Members opposite, he can strike it off from the Army and the Navy, and in that way increase the Sinking Fund by diminishing the forces of the country.

Question again proposed—

“That the word ‘now’ stand part of the Question.”

Question put—

The House divided:—Ayes 280; Noes 155.—(Division List No. 112.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
Allhusen, Augustus H. E.
Archdale, Edward Mervyn
Arnold-Foster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. J.
Baird, John George Alex.
Balcarras, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
Banbury, Fredk. George
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Barry, Rt. Hn. A. H. Smith-(Hunts)
Barton, Dunbar Plunket
Bathurst, Hon. A. Benjamin
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Beach, W. W. B. (Hants.)
Bemrose, Sir Henry Howe
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Beresford, Lord Charles

Blownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bigwood, James
Bill, Charles
Bond, Edward
Bonsor, Henry Cosmo Orme
Boscawen, A. Griffith-
Brodrick, Rt. Hn. St. John
Brown, Alexander H.
Butcher, John George
Carlile, William Walter
Carson, Rt. Hon. Edw.
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.)
Cayzer, Sir Charles Wm.
Cecil, E. (Hertford, E.)
Cecil, Lord H. (Greenwich)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
Chamberlain, J. A. (Worc'r)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Charrington, Spencer

Chelsea, Viscount
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Clarke, Sir Edw. (Plymouth).
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Colston, C. E. H. Athole
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Cooke, C. W. R. (Hereford).
Corbett, A. C. (Glasgow)
Cornwallis, Fiennes S. W.
Cox, Irwin E. B. (Harrow)
Cranborne, Viscount
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
Cross, H. Shepherd (Bolton).
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Curzon, Viscount
Dalbiac, Colonel Philip H.

Dalkeith, Earl of	Hutchinson, Capt. G. W. Grice	Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Dalrymple, Sir Charles	Hutton, J. (Yorks. N.R.)	Pretyman, Ernest George
Davenport, W. Bromley-	Jackson, Rt. Hn. W. Lawies	Priestley, Sir W. O. (Edin.)
Davies, Sir H. D. (Chatham)	Jebb, Richard Claverhouse	Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edw.
Denny, Colonel	Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick	Purvis, Robert
Dickson-Poynder, Sir J. P.	Jenkins, Sir J. Jones	Pym, C. Guy
Digby, J. K. D. Wingfield-	Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton	Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph	Johnston, Wm. (Belfast)	Rankin, Sir James
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon	Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)	Rasch, Major Frederic Carns
Dorington, Sir John Edw.	Jolliffe, Hon. H. Geo.	Renshaw, Charles Bine
Doughty, George	Kemp, George	Rentoul, J. Alexander
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers	Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir J. H.	Richards, Henry Charles
Douglas-Pennant, Hn. E. S.	Kenyon, James	Richardson, Sir T. (Hartlep'')
Doxford, Wm. Theodore	Kimber, Henry	Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Drage, Geoffrey	King, Sir H. Seymour	Robertson, Herbt. (Hackney)
Duncombe, Hon. H. V.	Knowles, Lees	Robinson, Brooke
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Harl	Lafone, Alfred	Round, James
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton	Laurie, Lieut.-General	Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
Elliot, Hon. A. R. Douglas	Lawrence, Sir E. Durning-(Corn.)	Ryder, John H. Dudley
Fardell, Sir T. George	Lawrence, W. F. (Liverpool)	Samuel, H. S. (Limehouse)
Fellows, Hon. Ailwyn Edw.	Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks.)	Sandys, Lt.-Col. T. Myles
Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manc'r)	Lea, Sir T. (Londonderry)	Saunderson, Rt. Hon. Col. E.
Field, Admiral (Eastbourne)	Lecky, Rt. Hon. Wm. E. H.	Savory, Sir Joseph
Finch, George H.	Lees, Sir E. (Birkenhead)	Seely, Charles Hilton
Finlay, Sir R. Bannatyne	Leigh-Bennett, H. Currie	Seton-Karr, Henry
Firbank, Joseph Thomas	Leighton, Stanley	Sharpe, Wm. Edward T.
Fisher, William Hayes	Loder, Gerald W. Erskine	Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renfrew)
Fitz Wygram, Gen. Sir F.	Long, Col. C. W. (Evesham)	Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
Flannery, Sir Fortescue	Long, Rt. Hn. W. (Liverpool)	Sidebottom, T. H. (Stalybr.)
Fletcher, Sir Henry	Lopes, H. Yarde Buller	Sidebottom, Wm. (Derbysh.)
Flower, Ernest	Lorne, Marquess of	Simeon, Sir Barrington
Folkestone, Viscount	Lowles, John	Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Forster, Henry William	Loyd, Archie Kirkman	Smith, A. H. (Christchurch)
Fry, Lewis	Lucas-Shadwell, William	Smith, J. Parker (Lanarka.)
Galloway, Wm. Johnson	Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred	Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (Strand)
Garfit, William	Macartney, W. G. Elliston	Spencer, Ernest
Gedge, Sydney	Macdonald, John Cumming	Stanley, Hon. A. (Ormskirk)
Gibbons, J. Lloyd	Maclure, Sir J. William	Stanley, Edw. J.-(Somerset)
Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H. (C. of Lond.)	McArthur, Chas. (Liverpool)	Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
Gilliat, John Saunders	McCalmont, H. L. B. (Camba)	Stephens, Henry Charles
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.	McKillop, James	Stewart, Sir M. J. M. Taggart
Goldsworthy, Major-General	Maple, Sir J. Blundell	Strauss, Arthur
Gordon, Hon. J. Edward	Martin, Richard Biddulph	Strutt, Hon. C. Hedley
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon	Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.	Sutherland, Sir Thomas
Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. Geo.'s)	Maxwell, Rt. Hn. Sir H. E.	Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Goschen, Geo. J. (Sussex)	Mellor, Col. (Lancashire)	Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.)
Graham, Henry Robert	Melville, Beresford Valentine	Thorburn, Walter
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)	Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.	Tollemache, Henry James
Green, W. D. (Wednesbury)	Milbank, Sir Powlett C. J.	Tomlinson, W. E. Murray
Greene, Hy. D. (Shrewsbury)	Milward, Col. Victor	Tritton, Charles Ernest
Greene, W. Raymond-(Camba.)	Monckton, E. Philip	Valentia, Viscount
Gretton, John	Monk, Charles James	Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. H.
Gull, Sir Cameron	Moon, Edw. Robert Pacy	Warr, Augustus Frederick
Gunter, Colonel	More, Rt. Jasper (Shropshire)	Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
Hall, Rt. Hn. Sir Chas.	Morgan, Hn. F. (Monm'thsh.)	Webster, Sir R. E. (L. of Wight)
Halsey, Thomas Frederick	Morrell, George Herbert	Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord Geo.	Morrison, Walter	Whiteley, Geo. (Stockport)
Hanson, Sir Reginald	Morton, A. H. A. (Deptford)	Whiteley, H. (Ashton-under-L.)
Hardy, Laurence	Mount, William George	Whitmore, C. Algernon
Heath, James	Muntz, Philip A.	Williams, J. Powell (Birm.)
Heaton, John Henniker	Murray, Rt. Hn. A. G. (Bute)	Willox, Sir J. Archibald
Helder, Augustus	Newark, Viscount	Wilson-Todd, W. H. (Yorks.)
Henderson, Alexander	Newdigate, Fras. Alexander	Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
Hill, Sir E. Stock (Bristol)	Nicholson, William Graham	Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Hoare, E. Brodie (Hampstead)	Northcote, Hon. Sir H. S.	Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart
Hobhouse, Henry	O'Neill, Hon. R. Torrens	Wylie, Alexander
Holland, Hon. L. R. (Bow)	Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay	Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
Hornby, Sir Wm. Henry	Parkes, Ebenezer	Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
Houldsworth, Sir W. Henry	Pease, H. Pike (Darlington)	Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong
Howard, Joseph	Pender, Sir James	Younger, William
Howell, William Tudor	Penn, John	
Howorth, Sir Henry Hoyle	Percy, Earl	
Hozier, Hon. J. Henry C.	Phillipotts, Capt. Arthur	
Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn	Platt-Higgins, Frederick	
Hudson, George Bickersteth	Pollock, Harry Fredk.	

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Sir William Walrond and
Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Allen, W. (Newc.-under-Lyme)	Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton	Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Asher, Alexander	Haldane, Richard Burdon	Pirie, Duncan V.
Ashton, Thomas Gair	Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm.	Power, Patrick Joseph
Asquith, Rt. Hn. H. Henry	Hayne, Rt. Hon. C. Seale-	Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
Atherley-Jones, L.	Hazell, Walter	Randell, David
Austin, Sir J. (Yorks.)	Hedderwick, T. Charles H.	Reckitt, Harold James
Austin, M. (Limerick, W.)	Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Chas. H.	Redmond, J. E. (Waterford)
Baker, Sir John	Holland, W. H. (York, W.R.)	Reid, Sir Robt. Threshie
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J.B. (Clackm.)	Horniman, Frederick John	Richardson, J. (Durham)
Barlow, John Emmott	Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.	Rickett, J. Compton
Bayley, T. (Derbyshire)	Hutton, A. E. (Morley)	Roberts, J. Bryn (Eifion)
Billson, Alfred	Jacoby, James Alfred	Robson, Wm. Snowdon
Birrell, Augustine	Johnson-Ferguson, Jabez E.	Schwann, Charles E.
Blake, Edward	Joicey, Sir James	Scott, C. Prestwich (Leigh)
Bolton, Thomas Dolling	Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)	Shaw, Chas. E. (Stafford)
Broadhurst, Henry	Jones, Wm. (Carnarvonshire)	Shaw, Thos. (Hawick Burghs)
Bryce, Rt. Hon. James	Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U	Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
Buchanan, T. Ryburn	Kearley, Hudson E.	Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Burns, John	Kinloch, Sir J. Geo. Smyth	Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Burt, Thomas	Kitson, Sir James	Souttar, Robinson
Buxton, Sydney Charles	Labouchere, Henry	Spicer, Albert
Caldwell, James	Lambert, George	Stanhope, Hon. Philip J.
Cameron, Sir C. (Glasgow)	Langley, Batty	Steadman, Wm. Charles
Cameron, Robt. (Durham)	Lawson, Sir W. (Cumb'land)	Stevenson, Francis S.
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.	Leng, Sir John	Strachey, Edward
Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson-	Leuty, Thomas Richmond	Stuart, Jas. (Shoreditch)
Causton, R. Knight	Lloyd-George, David	Sullivan, D. (Westmeath)
Cawley, Frederick	Lough, Thomas	Tennant, Harold John
Channing, F. Allston	Lyell, Sir Leonard	Thomas, A. (Carmarthen, E.)
Clancy, John Joseph	Macaleese, Daniel	Thomas, A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)	McKenna, Reginald	Thomas, David A. (Merthyr)
Clough, Walter Owen	Maddison, Fred.	Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Curran, Thos. (Sligo, S.)	Maden, John Henry	Ure, Alexander
Daly, James	Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand	Wallace, R. (Edinburgh)
Dalziel, James Henry	Morgan, J. L. (Carmarthen)	Wallace, Robert (Perth)
Dilke, Rt. Hn. Sir Chas.	Morgan, W. P. (Merthyr)	Walton, J. Lawson (Leeds, S.)
Dillon, John	Morley, Chas. (Breconshire)	Walton, J. (Barnsley)
Donelan, Captain A.	Morley, Rt. Hn. J. (Montrose)	Warner, T. Courtenay T.
Douglas, Chas. M. (Lanark)	Morton, E. J. C. (Devonport)	Wedderburn, Sir William
Duckworth, James	Moss, Samuel	Weir, James Galloway
Dunn, Sir William	Moulton, John Fletcher	Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Ellie, John Edward	Norton, Capt. Cecil Wm.	Williams, J. Carvell (Notts.)
Evans, Saml. T. (Glamorgan)	O'Brien, P. (Kilkenny)	Wilson, H. J. (York, W.R.)
Evans, Sir F. H. (South'ton)	O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)	Wilson, J. (Durham, Mid.)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert	Oldroyd, Mark	Wilson, John (Govan)
Fenwick, Charles	O'Malley, William	Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Ferguson, R. C. M. (Leith)	Palmer, Sir C. M. (Durham)	Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Hudd'rsf'd)
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond	Paulton, James Mellor	Woods, Samuel
Foster, Sir W. (Derby Co.)	Pease, A. E. (Cleveland)	Yoxall, James Henry
Fowler, Rt. Hn. Sir H.	Pease, J. A. (Northumb.)	
Goddard, Daniel Ford	Pease, Sir J. W. (Durham)	
Gourley, Sir E. Temperley	Perks, Robert William	TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Grey, Sir Edw. (Berwick)	Philipps, John Wynford	Mr. Herbert Gladstone
		and Mr. McArthur.

Main Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I move that this House do now adjourn. In response to the appeal of the honourable Gentleman opposite at the commencement of the proceedings, I beg to say that, as far as I can discover, I think it will be for the convenience of honourable Members if

on Friday we took Votes 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 16, in Class II., and other Votes, that is to say, the Votes of the Board of Trade, Mercantile Marine, Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade, the Board of Agriculture, Charity Commission, Local Government Board, and other Votes.

MR. ASQUITH: That does not include the Home Office Vote.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: No.

MR. JOHN ELLIS: When will you take the Committee on the Finance Bill?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I should hope to take it probably—though this is not an undertaking—on Thursday week.

BUSINESS DEFERRED.

LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL.

Committee deferred till Thursday next.

WATER SUPPLY BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday 27th June.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday 25th May.

TRUCK ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 3) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

First Lord of the Treasury.

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

CORONERS' INQUESTS (RAILWAY FATALITIES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till this day.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [9th March] further adjourned till Thursday.

INEBRIATES ACT (1898) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

PLACES OF WORSHIP (LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 19th May.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

MERCHANT SEAMEN (RATING CERTIFICATES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till this day.

EXECUTORS (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a second time, and committed for Tuesday next.

House adjourned at fifteen minutes after Twelve of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 3rd May 1899.

MR. SPEAKER took the Chair at Twelve of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

CROWBOROUGH DISTRICT GAS BILL.

Lords' Amendments considered, and agreed to.

ST. DAVID'S WATER AND GAS BILL.

Lords' Amendments considered, and agreed to.

HERNE BAY WATER BILL [H.L.]

Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

WALTON-ON-THAMES AND WEY-BRIDGE GAS BILL [H.L.]

Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

EDINBURGH CORPORATION BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

GLASGOW DISTRICT SUBWAY BILL [H.L.]

[Not amended], considered; to be read the third time.

MILLWALL DOCK BILL.

"To rectify the accounts of the Millwall Dock Company, and legalise expenditure of capital, and to amend the Acts of the Company relating to the raising of capital," read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP 2).

Ordered, That the Minutes of Evidence taken on the Wolverhampton and Essington Mineral Railway Bill, Session 1898, be referred to the Committee on Group 2 of Railway Bills.—(*Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

WEST MIDDLESEX WATER BILL.

Reported; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

EAST LONDON WATER BILL AND EAST LONDON WATER (TEMPORARY SUPPLY) BILL (CONSOLIDATED INTO THE "EAST LONDON WATER BILL").

Reported; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

GROCERS' LICENCES (SCOTLAND) ABOLITION BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Stirling;—Greenock;—and, Temperance Committee of the United Presbyterian Church; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND RENTS (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Petitions in favour;—From Southwark;—Meltham;—Slaithwaite;—Riston;—Scunthorpe;—St. Helens (Isle of Wight);—Wells;—Salford;—and, Llanfyllin; to lie upon the Table.

LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Rochester, against; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Aberfeldy;—Stirling;—Conon;—Chryston;—Greenock;—Saltcoats;—Kilmuir;—Dalry (two);—Glasgow (two);—South Durham;—Charlestown;—Strathmiglo;—Letham;—Dunblane;—Newmilns;—Maidenhead;—Fraserburgh;—Dumbarion;—Anderson;—Kirkwall;—Temperance Committee of the United Presbyterian Church;—Stirling;—and, Shettleston; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SERVANTS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Quarry Bank;—Cockermouth;—Aberavon;—Clerkenwell;—Acton;—Staines;—and, Horncastle; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Brackley;—Hulton's;—Houghton Main;—Cheadle;—Hazlewall Pit;—Platt Bridge;—Manver's Main;—Rotherham Main No. 2;—Roundwood;—Aldwarke No. 1;—Bolsover;—Burslem;—Sneyd;—Grange;—Hanley (three);—Hanley Deep;—and, Brownhills Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

PARISH CHURCHES (SCOTLAND).

Petition from Kirkcaldy, against proposed legislation; to lie upon the Table.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.

Petition from South Bristol, for extension to women; to lie upon the Table.

POSTAL TELEGRAPH CLERKS.

Petition of Charles E. Hall and other Postal Telegraph Clerks, for inquiry into their case; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Grangemouth, in favour, to lie upon the Table.

REGISTRATION OF FIRMS BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Greenock;—and Huddersfield; to lie upon the Table.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Whitehaven;—Buxton;—and, Connah's Quay; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment;—From Crieff;—and, Auchterarder; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From North Ormesby;—Suspension Bridge;—Newmarket;—Stratford;—West Bromwich;—Preston;—and, Cottingham; to lie upon the Table.

TEMPERANCE REFORM (THREEFOLD OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Dumbarion;—Shettleston;—and, Cupar; to lie upon the Table.

ADYE v. RHODES AND JAMESON.

A Petition of Sidney Henry Abye for leave to the proper officer of the House to attend the trial Abye v. Rhodes and Jameson, at the Royal Courts of Justice, To-morrow, Thursday 4th May, with the Second Report of the Select Committee on British South Africa; and for leave to Mr. Angus Gurney and Mr. Hodgson, Shorthand Writers, also to attend the said trial, and produce their original Notes of the Minutes of Evidence.

Leave given to the proper officer, and to the said Shorthand Writers, to attend accordingly.—(Mr. Labouchere.)

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EDUCATION (IRELAND).

Copy presented,—of Annual Report of the Commissioners, being for the year 1898 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Fourth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

NEW BILL.

**FISHERIES (IRELAND) ACTS
AMENDMENT BILL.**

“To amend the law relating to Fisheries in Ireland,” presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 28th June, and to be printed. [Bill 171.]

ORDER OF THE DAY.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. J. WILSON (Lanark, Govan) moved the Second Reading of this Bill. He reminded honourable Members that attempts at similar legislation had been made for the last 30 years. The strength of the demand had been indicated by the vote of the Scotch representatives for the Local Option Resolution in 1880, 1881, 1883, 1893, and 1895; also by the large majority of Scotch Members in each successive Parliament pledged to support the present Bill. The title of the Bill was “To enable electors to have effectual control over the liquor traffic in their respective areas in Scotland.” As would

be seen, the Bill contained three options—First, that by a majority of two-thirds of the ratepayers in a parish or district all licensed houses might be prohibited; secondly, that by a majority of votes the number of licences might be reduced; and, thirdly, that the first or second option, if adopted, might be repealed at the end of three years. It might be asked why the Bill should be limited to Scotland? The reasons were many and cogent. The first was that he believed the people of Scotland were more advanced in regard to temperance legislation than those of any other part of the United Kingdom. They had had for the last 45 years entire Sunday Closing in Scotland, and for the last 10 years they had restricted the hours for the sale of intoxicating liquor. In both cases there was no question of compensation. Speaking generally, the people of Scotland believed that there was no legal right on the part of the publican to compensation. He entered the business with his eyes open, knowing that he had no legal right to his licence beyond the year. Men of all classes, public bodies, church courts, and every section of the temperance party were in favour of this Bill; and the expression of the mind of the communities by *plébiscites* taken in the leading cities and towns of the country brought out the remarkable fact that there was an overwhelming majority, especially in the working-class districts of Scotland, in favour of the principle of this Bill. It was an undisputed fact that the people were entirely at the mercy of the licensing authorities, and that, while people who had wealth could keep out of the reach of the licensed houses, the working classes had to put up with houses which were surrounded by these licensed premises. There was a suburb of the burgh of Govan which had now a population of about 8,000 well-to-do artisans engaged in the shipbuilding yards on the Clyde, who had determined to do all they could to avoid having licences in their neighbourhood, and year after year, by strong remonstrances, they had been successful in securing that there should be no licence in that place. But why should they be compelled year after year to appear in the licensing court? Again, the drink traffic had become to large employers of labour a source of great irritation and of great loss of money in

carrying on their works. It was also a question of trouble to the police, and entailed a great burden upon the community. The chief of the police at Govan reported that last year, of the 3,017 persons apprehended, only 478 when arrested were sober. Surely that showed the necessity for passing such a Measure as this into law. He might state, to the credit of the municipal authorities in Glasgow, that they had abolished all licences on corporation property, thereby acknowledging that the liquor traffic was incompatible with the welfare and the best interests of the citizens. It was all very well for Chancellors of the Exchequer to revel in the large sums of money derived from the drinking power of the nation. But there were other considerations to be taken into account. Much of that money might be called blood-money—got at an enormous waste of life and deterioration of the morals and the happiness of the people. There had been exceptions in some Chancellors of the Exchequer. The late Sir Stafford Northcote, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, was asked what he would do without the revenue from drink, and his reply was—

“Give me a sober people, and I will have no difficulty in obtaining my revenue.”

To show the feeling of the people of Scotland on this subject, the *plébiscites* proved that 12 to 1 of those who voted were in favour of the direct veto as embodied in this Bill. As an instance of the feeling of the ratepayers in Stornoway, in Lewis, 3,945 ratepayers declared themselves in favour of prohibition and 32 against; in Edinburgh the vote was 21,673 for, and 433 against; in Glasgow the vote was 77,246 for, and 8,535 against. He observed also that Sheriff Campbell, in passing sentence of imprisonment on a fisherman for breach of the peace in Stornoway, said that after some years' study of the subject he had come to the conclusion that the best thing that could happen to the Island of Lewis was that strong drink should be excluded from it. That would be the best thing that could happen in many other places in Scotland. The licences in Lewis had been forced upon the people, not by the local Court, but by the Court of Quarter Sessions, in spite of the protest of the licensing magistrates of the island itself. Again, at the

Edinburgh Licensing Court, on April 11th, a remarkable instance occurred. The agent for the proprietors of “The Scotsman” stated that his clients had bought a large area on the east of the town and had acquired property on the north and west on which there were several licensed houses, and the agent stated that the only object of John Ritchie and Co., the proprietors of “The Scotsman,” in seeking to have the licences removed, was in the interest of their own employees and the public generally. The editor of “The Scotsman” had all along maintained that the diminution of licensed houses did not tend to diminish drunkenness; yet here they had the proprietors of the paper, a paper which had strongly opposed the objects of this Bill, saying that it was in the interests of their own workmen and of the city generally that the court should refuse to grant these licences. He (Mr. Wilson) held that every employer of labour might equally ask that licences should be taken away. At his own works in Govan he had 400 or 500 men, and they could not go to a single meal without having to run the gauntlet of three public-houses. The strange thing in connection with this matter of “The Scotsman” was that they never referred to the question of compensation. The proprietors desired to take away these licences, but would not promise anything to compensate the publicans for taking away their licences. The Bill was not a hard and fast one; it was elastic and permissive. If passed it would not shut one public-house unless the people were so minded. He made bold to say that there was no Measure of greater interest to the people of Scotland than this. It did not interfere with the existing licensing authority, only in the event of the two options in the Bill being adopted the licensing court would be bound to give effect to the result of the poll. In passing this Measure they would put an instrument into the hands of the people which would enable them to work out their own salvation from the evils and baneful effects of this terrible trade, and in time, it was hoped, would do away with the inebriate homes or the necessity for inebriate homes, and to a large extent our penitentiaries, our lunatic asylums, and our workhouses. He pleaded with right honourable and honourable Gentlemen to pass this Bill.

Mr. J. Wilson.

which would bring, in its results, hope and joy to many a home, and would be the means of bringing prosperity and happiness to the people of Scotland.

Amendment proposed—

“To leave out the word ‘now,’ and at the end of the Question to add the words ‘upon this day six months.’”—(*Mr. Faithfull Begg.*)

***MR. FAITHFULL BEGG** (Glasgow, St. Rollox) said he had listened to the speech with which the honourable Gentleman had introduced the Bill, but he had not heard one single new argument or one single new fact which would lead him in the smallest degree to alter the opinion which he had now held for many years on this subject. He had no hesitation whatever in asking the House to reject the Measure of which the Second Reading had now been moved. The honourable Member had said that for 30 years this subject had been agitated in Scotland. He gave the honourable Member credit for the great persistency with which he had advocated it, but after 30 years of advocacy he had utterly failed to make any impression upon that House.

MR. PIRIE: Not upon Scotland?

***MR. FAITHFULL BEGG:** His argument had not carried conviction to the minds of honourable Members, and the experiment he advocated, where it had been tried in other countries, had proved a complete failure. Why was this Measure introduced at the present time? A Licensing Commission had been sitting for the past three years which had taken exhaustive evidence, and he was sure that all who were interested in the subject looked forward with great interest to its verdict upon this question. We knew that the members of that Commission had failed to come to any common understanding, but we also knew that whatever their finding might be, this proposal of local veto, as far as we had any information, was at least one with which they would have nothing to do. We did not know, of course, what the view of the minority of the Commission would be, but we had sufficient information to know that the majority would not give a verdict in favour of local veto. He asked, therefore, why it should be

endeavoured to—he was going to say smuggle, but he would say pass—this Bill through the House of Commons at the present moment. It would have been better in his judgment to have waited until they knew what the result of the labours of the Commission was. It might have enabled them to form a better judgment upon this most intricate problem. He had been favoured, along with other Members of the House, with a circular issued with regard to this subject by the National Temperance Federation, and he gathered from it that at all events the promoters of this Measure had very poor faith in their chances of getting it through the House. For what was the appeal made in that circular? It urged them to support the Measure “so that it might be further considered in Committee.” They were thus to understand that even at this time of day the promoters were unable to make up their minds as to the precise form of the Measure. If they had as much faith as they professed in the Bill or the efficacy of its provisions after all these years of discussion, why were they not able to bring in a Measure to-day which would not require to be amended in Committee? His honourable Friend, in moving the Second Reading, used a phrase which was also in the circular. He said the Bill would not close one single public-house unless the people were so minded. It was one of his great objections to this proposal that statements of the kind were put forward in support of it which were only half truths. It was not accurate to say that a Measure such as this would not close one public-house unless it was the will of the people. In this matter it had been found impossible in other countries, by means of any votes such as those proposed in this Measure, to obtain the real mind of the people. The Bill, it was stated, would enable the electors to have effectual control over the liquor traffic. He would observe in passing that there was a material modification in this Measure as compared with that introduced in 1895. The latter contained a statement to the effect that—

“Whereas the traffic in intoxicating liquors is the main cause of poverty, disease, and crime, decreases trade and commerce, increases local taxation, and endangers the safety and welfare of the community.”

He fully expected to find that repeated in the present Bill, but it was entirely absent. Had honourable Gentlemen opposite given up that contention?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

*MR. FAITHFULL BEGG: Then why was it eliminated from the present Bill? The fact was that that statement had been riddled in the country over and over again. The figures did not substantiate it, and he admired the prudence of the promoters of the Bill in leaving it out of their present Measure. When they examined it they found that this Bill was not, as it professed to be, one to enable the electors to obtain effectual control over the liquor traffic. It was a Bill to enable, in certain circumstances, the electors to prohibit the liquor traffic, and in certain other circumstances to limit it. Why was not power given, however, to the electors to increase, if necessary, the number of public-houses? He did not advocate an increase of public-houses, but his point was, Why give effectual control in only one direction? Was it not conceivable that a district might require more public-houses as well as less? It was a misuse of language to describe the Bill as one for the effectual control of the traffic, when it gave control only in one direction and not in another. Control implied authority to do what one felt to be necessary or right, not authority to move only in one particular direction. The Bill, in other words, proceeded by a statement which was calculated to mislead. There was one peculiar provision in the Bill to which he wished to draw attention. It provided that all liquors seized were to be destroyed, but all the utensils were to be sold. Why not include both in a common anathema and have utensils as well as liquor destroyed? He made the suggestion in all good faith. He observed that chemists under the Bill were to be allowed to sell liquor. Why should they be allowed? He knew the results of such a provision in the United States and Canada. A Yankee friend of his, when asked whether it had produced a diminution in drunkenness or the consumption of intoxicating liquors, said, "No, I don't think it has produced a reduction in drunkenness,

but it has produced an increase of stomach-ache." He meant that it was perfectly easy for a person to obtain liquor at a chemist's shop, even though the public-houses in the locality were nominally closed. This was essentially an unjust and tyrannous Measure. It had no provision in it for the compensation of those who were at present engaged in the trade. His honourable Friend, in moving the Second Reading, repeated the statement that compensation was unnecessary, and that the licence was granted to publicans for one year, and no longer. That was another statement of the species to which he objected, and which were so commonly made by the advocates of this Measure. It was true that licences were annual, but everybody knew that there was a presumption that there would be a renewal, and that the reason why these licences were only granted for the year was that there might be control over the character of the house, and that if necessary the licence might be taken away. But it was a perversion of justice to say at the end of the year, if everything had been conducted according to the regulations laid down, that the man had no moral or equitable claim to the renewal of his licence. How could they imagine that anyone would be found to put his capital into a public-house, which was a legitimate enterprise, according to the laws of the country, if they said that they might arbitrarily take away his licence at the end of the year without compensation? Why, when slavery was abolished, even the slave owners were compensated. He did not know that it was in the power of those by whom the renewal of licences was granted to take into account anything but the law as it stood, and the usages of the country, to use the words of the Justice of the Peace oath. In other words, the mere letter of the law would be a gross injustice in this case, and he was surprised that those who proposed this Measure should take their stand upon a quibble such as that. The party who promoted this Bill called themselves the Temperance Party. His honourable Friend the Member for Govan had been temperate in his language, but generally those who advocated this Measure, in the country at all events, had never shown temperance in their language or their proposals. He had, since he entered the House, re-

Mr. Faithfull Begg.

ceived a minatory telegram from certain of his constituents threatening him with the withdrawal of the Temperance vote at the next election if he proceeded with his action to-day. He cared nothing for the Temperance vote. He was not sure that he ever received it, but no threat of this sort would ever prevent him from doing what he considered his duty in a matter of this kind—namely, protesting against this tyrannous Measure. He denied the right of those who advocated this Measure to call themselves the Temperance Party. Temperance implied moderation and self-restraint. But this was a high-handed attempt to coerce other people into doing what the promoters considered right, but with which other people had no sympathy. It was interfering arbitrarily with personal liberty in a matter in which every individual had a right to judge for himself. If this Bill should by any chance become law, as he ventured to say it would not, a fanatical minority by means of organisation could impose in the name of a sham majority a gross act of tyranny upon the people of the district. That was precisely what had happened in Canada and the United States. He yielded to no man in his desire for increased temperance in the habits of the people; but he denied the efficacy and the possibility of carrying out any good scheme under a Bill such as this, because the facts were all against it. The teachings of experience in this matter were worth more than all the theories of his honourable Friend. Temperance would be most largely promoted by a change in public opinion. A considerable change in public opinion had taken place in this country in recent times. The common sense of society now looked down upon the four-bottle man, and temperance had made its way without coercive measures such as those proposed in this Bill. The views expressed by the honourable Member for Dumfries-shire (Mr. Souttar) the other day were illustrative of the extraordinary ideas that seemed to permeate the minds of the advocates of the Measure. The honourable Member seemed to be firmly convinced that if there had been a Local Veto Act in force in the south of England at the time of the Battle of Hastings, the Norman Conquest would never have occurred. He admitted that it was exceedingly bad for

people to over-indulge in alcoholic liquor, but it was infinitely worse in his judgment to drive them to drink, by stealth, adulterated liquor in shebeens, and that would inevitably follow from the passing of a Bill such as this. Legislation like this, compulsory laws with regard to religion, excessive game laws, high Customs duties, had all resulted in worse evils than those they were intended to remedy. Why did his honourable Friends opposite not face the facts which had occurred in the United States and Canada during the last half-century? There measures dealing with the liquor traffic had been put into execution as far as they could be, and the result had been hopeless and demonstrable failure.

MR. COLVILLE: No, no!

*MR. FAITHFULL BEGG said he hoped his honourable Friend who said "No," would give them some facts in support of the other side. In the meantime that was his judgment. A member of the Commission which recently reported on the subject in Canada had told him that anything in the nature of prohibition was, in his judgment, absolutely hopeless as a remedy for this evil. In the last few days there had been very strong corroboration of that view in a document issued by the Canadian Government. The recent Canadian plebiscite yielded a majority of votes in favour of the principle of prohibition, and the Government were pressed to give effect to what was claimed to be the logical result. The number of votes was—Ayes 278,487, and Noes 264,571. The opinion of the Canadian Premier on that was that there was no occasion for the Government to pronounce either one way or the other. He pointed out that the electorate to which the question was submitted comprised 1,233,849, and the number who voted for prohibition was less than 23 per cent., or a trifle over one-fifth. Consequently he held that no good purpose would be served by forcing on the people a measure which had been shown to have the support of less than 23 per cent. of the electors. The votes recorded at the poll did not represent such an expression of public opinion as would entitle the Government to introduce into Parliament a prohibitory Measure. Here was the result of legislation and

agitation in Canada for upwards of a quarter of a century, that only a small fraction of the electors thought it worth while to record their votes in favour of this proposal. But that was not all. There was a Commission appointed in Canada in 1892, and it reported in 1895. That Commission took exhaustive evidence to the extent of 1,000 pages, and collected every kind of information that had the remotest bearing upon the question. After going through all the labour to which he had referred they reported in the following terms—

“The combined system of licence and regulation, which for centuries has been the rule of civilised nations with such amendment as experience has proved to be needful in order to make it more efficient, should not be departed from. The undersigned consider that the aim of any system of regulating or prohibiting the liquor traffic is to lessen or extinguish the evils arising from intemperance or from the improper use of intoxicating beverages, and after most anxious and careful consideration of the subject, they have come to the conclusion that this would not be accomplished by the enactment of a law prohibiting the manufacture, importation, and sale of intoxicating liquors, and that if such a law was passed it could not be efficiently enforced. Finally, it is illusory to anticipate that a general prohibitory law could be enforced with any reasonable degree of efficiency.”

That was the finding of the Commission after a most exhaustive inquiry. He might quote many other passages to prove that this Act had been a failure in Canada, but he thought that he should only be wearying the House if he went into further details. The fact he wished to emphasise was that the experiment of prohibition in Canada had proved a failure; that while in the earlier years the number adopting the Act went on increasing, since 1886 or 1887 the number of districts remaining under the Act had steadily decreased, and it had now been reduced to a very limited number indeed. In the United States the experiment had been going on for nearly half a century, one by one the States which had adopted prohibition had given it up, out of 17 States which originally adopted it 10 had repealed it and it was now only retained in seven States, representing a population of 5,000,000 out of a total of 6,000,000. In other words, four-fifths of those who adopted it had abandoned it, and he was assured that the total consumption of alcoholic liquors had not

decreased in those States, the only result having been that almost every chemist sold liquor in an underhand way. Throughout those prohibition districts, first of all the buyer lied in order to get alcoholic liquors, and the chemist winked at his fraud; then the police were bribed to overlook the fraud, and the moral sense of the people was corrupted and the law brought into contempt. He thought he had now said enough to justify his position in moving the rejection of the Bill. He did so because he considered that, as it stood, it was a sham. It was not for the promotion of temperance, although it was intended to be, but it was a Measure which would promote secret drinking and bogus clubs. The Bill was wrong in theory and impossible in practice, and was supported by exaggeration and perversion of facts. It would produce perjury in the courts, meanness in the individual, and contempt for the law. It was a tyrannous Bill, impracticable, wholly mischievous and bad, and he begged to move the Motion standing in his name.

Mr. H. V. DUNCOMBE (Cumberland, Egremont) said he seconded the Motion which had just been made on two broad grounds. First of all, he believed most firmly that the method proposed was a wrong method. Anybody who had listened to the facts put forward as to the working of this law could not possibly come to any other conclusion than that prohibition or local veto was the wrong way of dealing with the drink question. The proper method of dealing with the question was by greater supervision over adulteration, the closer supervision of the houses wherein it was sold, and improved education. If there was anything which had been shown conclusively during the history of this country it was that the worst possible way of dealing with the drink evil was to endeavour to deal with it by compulsion. It was a most extraordinary thing that honourable Members opposite, whenever they had a pet scheme, always endeavoured to carry it out by compulsion. They had not yet got in their hands the Report of the Commission which had been inquiring into this very subject, and until that Report was forthcoming it would be departing from a very useful precedent to prejudice

Mr. Faithfull Begg.

the question as far as Scotland was concerned. He begged to second the rejection of the Bill.

*MR. J. COLVILLE (Lanark, N.E.) said the honourable Member for St. Rollox had taken up the question in a way which would be complimentary to anyone who wished to advocate the interests of the trade, and the licensed victuallers could not have a more earnest advocate than the honourable Member who had just spoken. He had said that actual facts were worth more than theory, and he desired to refer to the facts of the case with respect to the action of other legislatures. The honourable Member did not explain to the House, when he spoke of the recent plebiscite taken in Canada, that it was for the total prohibition of the importation, manufacture, and sale of intoxicating liquor. It was not like the Bill which they were considering, which simply asked for power to be given to the people of Scotland to control the granting of licences. Notwithstanding the considerable majority which was cast against a proposal in Quebec, there was still a substantial majority over the whole Dominion of Canada of 12 or 13 thousand votes in favour of total prohibition. From the conclusion which the honourable Member drew, one would be led to imagine that through the action of the Canadian Government Canada was now without local option. All the supporters of this Bill desired was simply to be put in the position of Canada which she had enjoyed for many years, and if the electors of Scotland did not choose to use the facilities of such legislation then the onus must remain with them. With regard to America the honourable Member's figures seem to be terribly at fault. In the 46 States of the Union there were no fewer than 42 which had given the people in one form or other local veto, and there were 24 States which had given the people a direct veto in dealing with this traffic. In addition to this, of these 24 there were five which were total prohibition States. The honourable Member for St. Rollox spoke of the result of the experience of prohibition in America, but he forgot that the premier State of Maine, while it went back for a short time, had now reaffirmed its action and had adopted total prohibition of the traffic. This

resulted so satisfactorily that when an attempt was made a few years ago to repeal the Act the electors had it incorporated in the constitution of the State of Maine that there should be total prohibition. There had been similar local veto Measures in Cape Colony and several of the larger Australian Colonies, where the people could now prohibit the granting of new licences or reduce the number. Since 1828, when the licensing laws were amended the authority for granting licences in rural districts was practically in the hands of justices of the peace, who were appointed by the Lord Lieutenant of the counties, and while not amenable to the influence of the electors in the counties in which they granted licences, they were lamentably open to undue pressure from those who were interested in obtaining new licences. This had become a scandal in Scotland which was admitted not merely by temperance reformers, but by all moderate men, and the existing system was just about as rotten as any system could possibly be. When a man wanted a licence he set influences at work upon the magistracy, but the only influence that could be brought to bear in the interests of the people was that of a few self-sacrificing citizens who had set themselves the task of stemming the tide of intemperance and putting what pressure they could to get the justices to bring an unbiased mind to bear upon this question. The result had been woeful in the extreme. When the bailies who were responsible to the localities had thought fit, in the interests of peace and order, to reduce the number of licences, their decisions had been ruthlessly overturned by the Quarter Sessions, who, knowing that they were not responsible to the electors, but having been appointed by the Lord Lieutenant, had gone in the face of the expressed wishes of the community. Some years ago in the City of Glasgow the local magistrates decided to refuse certain objectionable licensed houses. An appeal was made to the Quarter Sessions, when the Chairman intimated that they had decided to temper justice with mercy, and the decision of the responsible bailies was defeated in case after case without any attempt at justification or reason being given why

their decisions were overturned. In the Borough of Lanark the local magistrates decided that there were two very objectionable houses which had given the police a great deal of annoyance, and they refused to renew the licences. Notwithstanding this, and also the fact that the police protested that they could not possibly maintain order and the proper government of the town, if the licences were again granted, the Quarter Sessions again overturned their decision. At Motherwell the police had reported the necessity of restricting drinking facilities because of the great temptation put in the way of the working classes, but notwithstanding this ten additional applications were made in April last for licences. In view of this the inhabitants of Motherwell took a plebiscite of the inhabitants, and out of an adult population of 10,000 there were 7,051 who voted against increasing the number of licences. This result was made known to the licensing authorities, but in face of it three additional public house licences were foisted upon the community. He put it to the House whether any right thinking man could believe that the existing state of the law was satisfactory. There was another strong argument in favour of this Bill, and it was that since 1876 a majority of the Scotch Members had steadily voted for this principle. To-day there were 39 Members for Scotland who had declared themselves in favour of the direct popular control of the liquor traffic, and there were 15 others—and he had reason to believe that the Lord Advocate was amongst them—who, while they did not pledge themselves to support the Bill, had declared themselves in favour of some Measure of local option.

Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY said the honourable Member was mistaken. About 10 years ago, when he was first elected, he did give such a pledge. He had since come to be of opinion that it was such a mistake that the next time he got an opportunity of meeting his constituency he told them that he would not be bound by any such pledge. Consequently, both in the last Parliament and in this Parliament, he was not pledged to anything of the kind.

Mr. Colville.

*MR. COLVILLE said he would accept the honourable Gentleman's assurance that he was mistaken. The information he had was given on the authority of the Scottish Permissive Bill and Temperance Association, who got up the statistics from which it appeared that there were 39 Scotch Members, not all on this side of the House, who had expressed themselves in favour of local option. They had the result of the passing of the Forbes Mackenzie Act.

*MR. COLVILLE: It was significant that when the Forbes Mackenzie Act was passed it was said it would be treated as a dead letter, but there had been in the succeeding 10 years a great decrease in the consumption of British spirits in Scotland. In the years 1887 and 1888 there were 22 towns, including the cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, which, by overwhelming majorities, declared that the people ought to have some control in respect to the issue of licences, and this was practically made a test question at the majority of elections in Scotland. If this question were left to the decision of the Scottish Members alone, it would be settled satisfactorily in the interests of the great majority of the people of Scotland. He thought the House of Commons should have some regard to the claim of Scotland, that Scottish questions should be dealt with in conformity with the clearly expressed opinion of the majority of the Scottish Members. The honourable Member who moved the rejection of the Bill considered it an unjust and tyrannous proposition that they should seek to give the people power to close the public-houses at an earlier hour without compensation. The result of closing at 10 o'clock in Scotland had been eminently satisfactory, and no serious attempt had ever been made to put back the hour of closing to 11 o'clock. There had not been the faintest suggestion that compensation should be paid to the publicans for the withdrawal of the last hour, which usually was the hour in which the most intemperance took place.

*MR. FAITHFULL BEGG: My remarks were solely directed to the question of prohibition.

MR. COLVILLE said this Bill was not merely a total prohibition Bill, but it also proposed to give the people power to restrict the existing number of licences. The honourable Member said this legislation had been a failure in other countries, but he (Mr. Colville) maintained that in the State of Maine it had been a success. When compensation was talked of he would ask the honourable Member who was to compensate the families, the widows and the orphans, who had suffered incalculable injury from this nefarious traffic? Who was to compensate the ratepayers, who had been heavily taxed for the maintenance of the police to keep the streets in anything like decency as the direct result of the liquor traffic? If compensation was to be given, it should not be given to the licence-holders, but to the multitudes of families who had suffered by the perpetuation of this great injustice to a freedom-loving people. Scotland was two generations ahead of England, Wales, and Ireland in respect of temperance sentiment, and he appealed to the House to give a favourable consideration to this Bill.

MR. JOHNSTONE said this Bill was not only a shining example of ill-conceived and ill-thought-out legislation, which to his mind was more calculated to do mischief than good, but it was one of the most remarkable Bills that had probably ever been brought into that House. The first section of the Measure was one of the most extraordinary provisions which had ever been embodied in an Act of Parliament. According to that section, in one of the prohibited areas it would become unlawful not only to sell or to possess, but even to dispose of, any alcoholic liquor. Imagine the position to which they would be reduced by the passing of this Measure. Anybody with half a decanter of sherry in his possession would not be able to dispose of it. He could not drink it. He could not even use it in cooking or throw it away. A man who had his cellar full of alcoholic liquor would have to lock the door and, he presumed, hand the key over to the local authority. He could not even dispose of it in his own house.

MR. COLVILLE: The honourable Member is entirely misrepresenting the

provisions of the Bill. There is no such prohibition as to personal use.

MR. JOHNSTONE: The words of the clause are—"or otherwise dispose of alcoholic liquor."

MR. COLVILLE: For sale, of course.

MR. JOHNSTONE said he was perfectly satisfied to take the judgment of the House upon the meaning of the clause. It was a very good example of the ingenuity which had been displayed in the framing of the Bill. By a later section it was proposed that every utensil which was used for alcoholic liquors, and which had the taint of alcohol upon it, was to be forfeited, so that the unhappy owner of alcoholic liquor would not only be unable to dispose of his liquor, but he could not even draw a cork, because he supposed that the cork would be forfeited, and every tumbler he had used would also be forfeited. It was an unjust Measure, inasmuch as it provided no compensation for those who might suddenly find the means of livelihood taken away from them. The great weakness of the Bill was that it would come into operation where it was least needed, and would not be put into operation at all where it was most needed. It would only be put into operation in the communities where there was a strong growing temperance feeling, while in those communities where the friends of temperance were in the minority the Bill would never come into operation at all. That, in his opinion, constituted one of the strongest reasons against accepting a Measure of this character. He would briefly indicate what he considered was the direction in which reform ought to come if the idea was to remove temptation out of the way of those who are likely to succumb to it. If the desire was to limit the facilities for obtaining intoxicating liquor, he believed that by far the most effectual mode of accomplishing that would be by giving increased powers to the licensing authorities. At present their powers were unduly limited. He would propose to give the authorities power to close the houses in a particular district at an earlier hour, if they thought fit, for a month or for a longer period. He should

give them the power to say that in the winter the houses should be closed at eight o'clock, and in the summer they might be open to a later hour. As magistrate having to deal with licensing questions, he had often felt that they were powerless in the everyday matters of licensing, and he believed if the magistrates had extended powers, such as he had indicated, they would exercise those powers honestly and fairly, and with advantage to the people. It was quite impossible for him to support the Bill before the House, because, in his opinion, it was ill-conceived and unjust.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON said he gave the Bill his most cordial support. The main principle on which it was based was that the powers now exercised by nominated justices should be handed over to the control of the people themselves. The honourable Member who had just sat down proposed to give greater power to the licensing magistrates, but he was curious to know what the honourable Member's objections were to give that power to the people themselves. There was no valid reason why the people themselves should not have the same power over licensing as they had over all the other details of local administration.

MR. JOHNSTONE: The people are not responsible for the peace and good government of their neighbours.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON said that might not be so in the metropolis of London, but in the City of Glasgow, for instance, the bailies, who were the licensing authority, were also responsible for the maintenance of peace and good order in that city. He did not approach this subject either as a teetotaler or as a prohibitionist, and for his own part did not believe that prohibition powers would be exercised in Scotland to any appreciable extent, but the powers that would be exercised, he thought, would be those in favour of the reduction of the number of licences. Having regard to the ravages of the liquor traffic in Scotland, and the imperfections of the present licensing system, they must feel that there was some need for a considerable change in the manner in which the traffic was carried on. Various schemes of reform had been suggested into which

he need not enter, but, quite apart from all considerations of temperance, he maintained that there was no good reason why the control of the liquor traffic should not be placed in the hands of the people themselves, and that until that was done they would have very little prospect of any very great change for the better.

On the return of the SPEAKER after the usual interval—

MR. ASCROFT (Oldham) rose to oppose the Second Reading of the Bill, but in doing so he wished to say that he was quite as ready as any Member who had backed or advocated the Bill to adopt measures which he thought would in any way tend to reduce drunkenness. A great many people made the mistake in believing that local veto in different districts would carry out the desires of the inhabitants. His own experience was that drunkenness was not caused by the love of drink, but by a feeling of desperation into which many poor fellows got when trade was bad, when they could not get work, when they felt that life was not worth living, and when at last they rushed to drink for some little consolation in their trouble. He believed that the improvement in the country which had been going on was due to better homes, open spaces, free libraries, museums, recreation grounds, and other means of attracting the people away from the public-houses, which in former times were the only places to which these people could go for relaxation. An extension of these attractions, he believed, would be a far greater means of increasing temperance than any compulsory Bill which could be passed by the House. This Bill, he contended, was unfair, unreasonable, cruel, and dishonest. He would rather see England drunk than dishonest. Honesty was the one thing on which Englishmen prided themselves more than anything else, and the principle of the Bill was dishonest from beginning to end. It put power into the hands of unprincipled men to go before the local authority with a requisition for a poll, the signatures of which might be forged; and in little more than a fortnight from that requisition being presented, power was given to cast into the streets a great body of respectable men and their families.

What had they done to be thus ruined? They were not felons, they had committed no crime, nor no offence even against the licensing laws. The Bill was ruinous, unjust, and dishonest, and, if passed, it would be resented by the public opinion of the country. He could not understand the position of the honourable Members who had brought in the Bill, and who wished for prohibition if they could get it. It was confined to Scotland, but he always thought that Scotland was the place where whisky was made. If they were sincere, why did they not take steps to stop all the distilleries, and prevent the manufacture of the whisky which, as they said, was ruining the people. They did not do so, because, in the first place, the Scotch liked Scotch whisky; and, in the second place, because they liked the money produced by the whisky. He looked to the names on the back of the Bill, but he found that the seven Gentlemen there represented constituencies of no great size. The total votes polled at the last election of these constituencies was 25,226, and the whole of their majority was only 3,407—a majority just sufficient—if the Bill passed—to pass the restrictive resolution, but not sufficient for total prohibition. He was astonished to find that the name of one of the most active Members of the House was not on the back of the Bill—the honourable Member for Ross and Cromarty. That honourable Member took an interest not only in Scotland, but in every portion of the globe,

“From Greenland’s icy mountains,
To India’s coral strand.”

But why was it that amongst all the questions he put in the House he never asked one regarding the drunkenness of Scotland, for he (the Member for Oldham) presumed that the drunkenness there must be terrible to demand such a Bill. He maintained that the absence of the name of the honourable Member for Ross and Cromarty from the Bill was one of the strongest proofs imaginable that the Bill was not required. Again, before a Bill of this kind was introduced there ought to have been some data to support it. Reference was made to Canada and the United States, but they could manage their own affairs in this country. Not a single figure had been produced to prove that drunkenness had

increased to such an extent that the present law was unable to deal with it, or that the magistrates were corrupt. The magistrates had been described as a mob of unorganised justices of the peace in favour of licences. That might be a reason for bringing in a Bill either to alter the licensing authority or to remove magistrates who would not do their duty, or to provide other checks on irregularities that would be satisfactory. But that was not a sufficient reason to bring in a Bill to punish the innocent. They had not only to deal with drunkenness—if the law was not strong enough to deal with drunkenness they should make it stronger; but that was no reason why they should commit a ten times more serious offence against people who carried on a legitimate trade. They had to consider how this Bill would affect the traffic, the mind of the public, and the moderate man who took his glass. But all these considerations had been dealt with by the Royal Commission. Why was this Bill to be rushed through the House before the Royal Commission had brought in its Report? The honourable Member for Mid Lanark and the honourable Member for Leith Burghs had spoken of some objections to the decisions of the justices in Quarter Sessions, but that had nothing to do with the Bill. He should like to ask the honourable Members who backed the Bill how they voted the other night on the increased duties on wines. He believed that nearly every one of the Party to which they belonged voted against the increase of the duties on the foreign wines; but he should have thought that if they were in favour of temperance, they would have supported the Government in putting an extra duty on foreign wines, which was likely to decrease their consumption. There was another point: if the Bill was carried it would not effect the desired object. In the case of towns or burghs divided into wards, a poll might be taken in each ward. What would be the result? Take Glasgow, for instance, with its 12 wards.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Twenty-four wards.

MR. ASCROFT: Well, 24 wards.

MR. COLVILLE: Does not the honourable Gentleman know that Glasgow

is the second city of the Empire, and has a population of 700,000?

*MR. ASCROFT: Suppose it was; it was in so dirty and drunken a state, or ought to be, to necessitate this Bill. Nothing in the world would justify the introduction of this Bill unless it was, and it was not in that state when he last visited it. Well, suppose all the public-houses in one ward were closed as a result of one of the resolutions in the Bill being passed, the people who wanted a drink would have simply to cross the street and get the drink. There were one or two items in the Bill to which he wished to call attention. In the first place, if a requisition was signed by one-tenth of the inhabitants of a locality a poll could be demanded. Now, he asked, why should one-tenth of the inhabitants of a place have the power of putting the other nine-tenths of the inhabitants to all the trouble, expense, and annoyance of an election a week after. His next point was that some unprincipled men might get up a requisition, and demand a poll on a day when a great number of the electors were out of town; the result would be that many thousands might be disfranchised, and a large number of houses might be closed, and the public made to suffer a great deal. If they intended to act fairly they ought to provide sufficient checks and safeguards so that the public might know that the requisition was speaking the voice of the electors instead of something like one-tenth of the names being possibly forgeries. He felt that every time a Bill of this kind was brought into the House which was not prepared in the interests of all, but in the interests of a small section who held very exaggerated views on the temperance question, that it threw back the cause of temperance at least 20 years. The public resented anything that savoured of being unfair or dishonest, and there was no country in the world where working men would reject anything of that character sooner than the working men of this country.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) said that perhaps he might be allowed, although an Englishman, to take part in a Scotch Debate. He presumed that if the fate of this Bill rested upon the votes of the Scottish

Mr. Colville.

Members alone it would be carried, and if the Bill was defeated it would be by English votes over-riding the votes of those Members who were sent to represent Scotland. They all had the same object in view, for nobody was in sympathy with intemperance. He was quite in sympathy with the honourable Member opposite, who said that he did not understand why certain Members of the Opposition were called the temperance party. For many years he had rebelled against its being called the temperance party, for everybody belonged to that party. He was not aware that there was an intemperance party, or at least he never heard of anybody avowing that they belonged to it. They had been called the extreme temperance party. Temperance was a good thing in itself, and that was admitted, and they were called extreme persons because they went to the extremity of trying to make the whole kingdom as sober as possible. They had hundreds of Acts of Parliament to regulate the liquor trade, and even the trade itself was against drunkenness. He had read in certain trade papers that if there was one thing which a liquor seller hated more than anything else it was a drunken man, whom he looked upon as his greatest enemy. The publican, however, seemed to act upon that passage in the Bible which stated—

“If thy enemy thirsts give him drink.”

Many associations had been formed to deal with this great evil, and Lord Shaftesbury once said that if it had not been for the temperance societies this country would not have been worth living in. Personally he did not think that all those valuable bodies would accomplish much more than they had done so long as the legalised temptation to drink in public houses and beer shops were set up all over the country as they were at present. Instead of helping sobriety the law at present hindered it. There were only three attitudes which the legislature could take. First of all, they might have free trade. He was in favour of free trade in everything that was good, but not when it was bad. It was now nearly 70 years since the Duke of Wellington and his Government, feeling very much concerned with the evils arising from drink, thought they would cure that evil by having free trade in beer. Apparently

they did not know that beer did as much harm as spirits, and they thought that if they had wholesome beer and abolished the monopoly they would effect a great reform. The carrying of that Bill through the Houses of Parliament pleased the Duke of Wellington so much that he said it was a victory second only to the Battle of Waterloo. What was the result? Sydney Smith told them the result was that after the operation of free trade in beer, for about three months the beer began to work, and that everybody who was not singing or bawling was in a beastly state. Mr. Gladstone brought in the Grocers' Licenses Bill, which was introduced to promote temperance, and he said, "Fancy a woman going into a public-house." Ever since then the temperance people had been crying out against grocers' licences, because they promoted drinking amongst women. He did not think anybody in the House would say that they were in favour of free trade in drink, for free trade in this respect was dead and buried. There was a system of regulation which they had been trying now for 400 years. The legislature had arranged who should sell, when they should sell, how they should sell, and how much they should sell. The magistrates picked out the best men they could of the highest character to sell drink, and the man who sold the most drink was picked out by the Government of the day, and created a peer. He wished to knock to pieces the talk about adulteration. In the first place, that was a libel on his friends the publicans. He did not believe it, because there was no evidence about it. It had just been found that drink was less adulterated than any other article of consumption in this country.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Hear, hear!

SIR WILFRID LAWSON: That is quite true, and I have no doubt the honourable Member knows all about it. How could it be made any worse, for they could not get anything cheaper in order to make it worse. Those who believed in the regulation in the liquor traffic had had a fair trial, and he did not know what more they could do. The result had been that their gaols, workhouses, and lunatic asylums were filled with the victims of drink, while the country was overflowing with a wealth almost fabulous. Free trade was dead, regulation

had failed, and nothing now remained but the prohibition of the liquor traffic. The House shuddered at the word "prohibition," and many honourable Members believed that if the facilities for getting drink were abolished the world would become a desert, and would not be worth living in. He remembered the story of a Kentucky colonel who fell into the Mississippi, and after being fished out and resuscitated he opened his eyes and said, "Where am I?" "On the river bank," was the reply. "Which bank?" asked the colonel. "Iowa," was the reply. "Iowa, Prohibition State. Throw me in again," said the colonel. He had heard of the person who had said if he lost the key of the cellar on Sunday that Sunday would be no Sunday to him. They could not legislate for those few people. His theory was—and it was the only bit of Latin he knew—*salus populi lex suprema*, which was only another way of saying that he desired the greatest good for the greatest number. John Stuart Mill had said that every increase of duty upon an article was prohibition to the poor man, and if the price of a glass of beer was 2d. and a man had only got a penny, they prohibited that man from purchasing beer, and that was prohibition, only not so effective as he desired. The case of America was a good subsidiary argument, but he was quite satisfied with what had gone on in this country. The experience of the United Kingdom was decidedly favourable to the local prohibition of the liquor traffic, and that was the principle of the Bill which they were now discussing. Let them take as an illustration Liverpool, which floated, breathed, and was a very Mecca of alcohol. There was a large district in Liverpool which was called Toxteth Park, where they prohibited all publichouses, and the result was that whenever a house in that district was vacant there were 20 applications for it. The same result was to be found at Shaftesbury Park, near London. He once had the honour of attending a meeting, and sat next to Mr. Disraeli on the platform. He had never sat side by side with a Tory Minister before, and he did not think he should ever do so again. At that meeting Mr. Disraeli made a speech, and he said—

"You have solved the future of the working classes of this country by getting rid of the drink shops."

Many landlords stipulated that no beer-houses or drink shops should be erected on their estates, and the result had been just what they might have expected. He remembered Lord Cranbrook, when he was Mr. Gathorne Hardy, saying—

"There was not a proprietor of land who did not stipulate that beer shops or public-houses should not be erected on his property without his consent, and, therefore, let them not legislate on false pretences. Let the influence of philanthropy which animated them in their private capacity in checking drunkenness on their own estates animate them in like manner in checking it throughout the country."

Now that was all they wanted. They desired to give the people the same chance as the landlords had. They had gone on forcing the licensing of those drink shops up and down Scotland, and now his honourable Friend said by this Measure that it was time this state of things should be stopped. He believed his honourable Friend, who had introduced the Bill, spoke for the multitudes in Scotland. Some of them were enthusiasts, some of them were lukewarm, but they all thought that it was better to do something in the matter than nothing at all. Some were incredulous, and did not believe the Measure would do any good, but the vast number of the Scotch Members united in supporting his honourable Friend because they thought that whether it would do good or harm it was only right and fair that the people themselves should have a chance of dealing with what affected them more than anybody else. In the last Parliament, when they passed the Local Government Bill, it was said that when the people had their parish and district councils they would be able to control the parson and the squire. If the parson and the squire were to be controlled by the people, why was the publican not to be so controlled? He thought he had shown that there was a chance of doing some good by this Bill. There had been plenty of schemes of licensing reform—in fact, there appeared to be as many schemes as there were people, but there was no great weight of public opinion at the back of any of them which would carry them against the opposition of the great drink traffic. They talked about the publichouse being the poor man's cellar, but all they wanted to do by this Bill was to give the poor man the key of his cellar. If they only had the chance of doing some good after

all that had gone on the Measure was worth carrying. They came there to protect the life and property of their people. They raised £50,000,000 for armaments for the purpose of keeping off the Russians, the Prussians, the Chinese, and the Japanese. It was quite right to do that if they were afraid of them, but he was not. Let them remember what Lord Wolseley said—and he is not a gloomy fanatic like himself, not a man with a fad, but a good, sound, statesmanlike warrior. He said—

"England has many enemies, but the most pressing enemy is drink."

He hoped that nobody would call him a fanatic after that. They did not need large sums of money to meet this enemy. They would not disorganise any industry or drain the resources of the country, but they simply wished to trust the people with a simple weapon by which they could defend themselves against this great enemy. He thought a great deal of the Debate had travelled too far into detail, and he was not going to defend the machinery of the Bill. In the old days they used to Debate only the principle on the Second Reading, but now they had got into the habit of discussing the details. He was supporting the principle of the Bill, and he would leave the details to be dealt with in Committee. Those who went into the "Aye" Lobby would say, "We trust the people to defend themselves against this enemy," and those who went into the "No" Lobby would say, "We do not trust the people to defend themselves against this enemy." If they were not in a majority upon this Measure it would be because the English Members would overrule the Scottish Members. If they desired to do something to give hope and encouragement to those who, after long years of disappointment and discouragement had been fighting for the overthrow of this enemy, they would pass this Measure, for the Colonial Secretary himself had stated that the drink tyranny which was pressing upon this country must be overthrown if ever England was to be as free and as happy and as good as they wanted to see it.

SIR M. STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said he believed that he had done as much for the cause of temperance as a good many other honourable

Gentlemen on the other side. At all events, he had done what he could to promote the cause of temperance in the district in which he lived, and he had met with some success. He had put down a publichouse at considerable pecuniary loss. He had purchased another house, and attempted to put it down; but he found that the prevailing opinion of the district was very strong. If they gave the people the power of putting down houses, they must give them the sole power of control, also of granting them where they were required. This Bill did not trust the people. They gave it to the people to decide whether they voted for a licence or not, but they did not give them the power to decide whether they would have a publichouse in the district or not. Surely for every working man that was an essential factor in this question. He was anxious to test the feeling of a rural district in regard to this matter. He had the School Board franchise to guide him, and a regular day set apart, with due notice as to what the vote would be. He himself took no part whatever in it, and he insisted that any over whom he had any control should take no part, and the decision was left to the freewill of the people. The result was, roughly speaking, two-thirds of the number polled were in favour of the retention of the publichouse. He wished to remind the House of the large number of female voters who voted on this occasion, for 18 in 27 voted for the retention of the publichouse. He was afraid that if his honourable Friend carried his Bill he would find that instead of putting down publichouses there would be a very strong inclination on the part of the people to have more publichouses in their midst. He could assure them that the people took a great interest in keeping up these publichouses, and so strongly did they feel that they were robbing a man by taking away his licensed property that they declined to be a party to it. He was not opposed to the principle of the Bill, but it did not carry out what it was expected to do. He was in favour of the principle of compensation, for if a man in possession of lawful property was deprived of it by law he ought to be compensated. In legislating upon this question their great endeavour should be to reduce the number of licences. He maintained that this Bill did not even carry out the wishes of

its promoters, and if it passed into law it would prove most disastrous. If one house was closed and another remained, the other would retain such a value that the operation would be practically beggaring one man in order to make another rich.

MR. DOUGLAS (Lanark, N.W.) said he thought there was very little difference of opinion in the House as to the importance of this question. Those honourable Members who supported this Measure appreciated the sympathetic tone of the honourable Gentleman who had just spoken. He thought there was very little difference of opinion as to the importance of the matter, but the difference came in as to whether anything could be done in the way of improving the licensing arrangements of the country. He thought that even those who were most earnest in their support of this Measure must admit that the whole question of temperance reform was not a question which could be isolated and treated by itself, but it formed part of a much larger question affecting the condition of the working classes of this country, especially in large towns. He thought they must look for a complete improvement and for temperance reform to a very general improvement in intelligence and a growth in the appreciating of the higher and less injurious pleasures, and, perhaps, in a larger provision for the recreation and the leisure of the working classes. There was no more real source of delay in all these matters than the existence of intemperance, and they must also admit that the licensing arrangements had something to do with the question. It was not because he thought this was a perfect Bill that he supported it, but because it seemed to him to embody a principle on which alone they could progress towards the satisfactory settlement of the question. That principle was that this matter ought to be subjected to popular and local control, and he thought both these aspects of this principle had been fully admitted even in the arguments used against the Bill. The honourable Member for St. Rollox urged that popular control had failed, and that you could not hope to deal with the matter on a large scale. This question must be dealt with locally in such a way as to take into account the existing

opinions and feelings of the localities themselves; and in what fell from the honourable Member for St. Rollox he thought there was a very powerful argument in favour of the principle of popular democratic control. How could they in any other way ascertain the opinion, the wishes, and the needs of the people in the districts for which they desired to legislate except by consulting them and taking them into their confidence by placing the control of this question in their hands? The magistrates were popularly elected, and had the initiative, but that was subject in every case to the veto of the Quarter Sessions. The result was that that stultified any reform that might be demanded from any particular district. For his part, he thought it would be most unfortunate if it was sought to decide municipal election upon any issue of this sort, for he was confident that the result would be that many men capable of rendering valuable municipal service would be excluded. Town councillors became magistrates without having had any sort of understanding with those whom they represented in regard to those important functions which they were to discharge in their representative capacity. As to the form of control which was proposed to be given under this Bill, he frankly confessed that he wished to see a more practical and a more effective method of giving effect to the principle of the Bill. He believed that it would be very much better that this question of licensing should be controlled by boards popularly elected for that purpose. If that reform was adopted he was very strongly of opinion that a better result would be obtained. He was very well aware of the difficulties in the way of his suggestion, and he admitted it was extremely undesirable to multiply the number of local elections. Those difficulties, however, did not convince him that this method was impossible, for he believed it was the best system they could have. That preference which he had expressed indicated a certain difference of opinion between himself and some other honourable Members who had supported this Bill. As to the likelihood of prohibition taking place, for his part, he did not believe that the effect of this Measure, speaking generally, would be prohibitive. He believed it would lead to a reduction of licences, and, in his opinion, a matter of that sort

Mr. Douglas.

was much better entrusted to an elected board than to a popular direct vote. It was the right of the people of any locality to protect themselves by prohibition against what they believed to be inimical to their highest interests. The liquor traffic was no more obliged than any other to see that its business was carried on so as not to be a public scandal and evil. But there was a special obligation in this respect upon a trade where the profits obtained were so vast and were maintained by what was practically a monopoly under the present system of licensing, and, above all, where the interests involved were so vital. It would be the merest affectation to pretend that the liquor traffic was not conducted without a vast amount of unnecessary scandal and evil. It was common knowledge that the most ordinary and necessary rule which prohibited the sale of drink to intoxicated persons was violated every day, and the traffic, as it existed, was a source of the greatest evil and danger in many communities. The power of visiting the punishment of prohibition on any continued violation of public order by the liquor traffic would be one of the greatest weapons that could be put into the hands of communities. The people of Scotland felt that the interests of the community were being subordinated to those of a powerful monopoly. They believed this had gone on long enough, and too long, and there was no mandate Scotch Liberal Members held more definitely from those who sent them to Parliament than, if possible, to procure from the House a remedy on the lines of the Bill now before them.

MR. CORBETT (Glasgow, Tradeston) said it was stated that it was only in neighbourhoods where such measures were least required that they would be enforced. From his own experience he always found that the reverse was the case, and that it was where the strongest liquor was drunk and the greatest amount of drunkenness prevailed that temperance sentiment ran highest. It was where the nuisance was felt most that the desire to put it down was strongest. Therefore, it would be in the most drunken, and not the most temperate, neighbourhoods that this Bill would be most fully enforced. There was absolutely no real doubt that

Scottish opinion was in favour of the Bill, and it was a striking fact that no representative of a Scottish constituency could be found to second the Motion for rejection. English and Irish Members must follow their conscientious convictions, but in the consideration of a Measure of this sort it was important to remember that the people in the country concerned believed in the effect of such legislation, and earnestly and persistently desired that the Bill should pass. He was glad to be able to give the Measure his fullest and heartiest support.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) said the almost unbroken testimony of Scottish Members was in favour of the Bill, and the Debate offered a refutation to the conclusion he had seen attributed to the Licensing Commission, that in Scotland there was no great demand for popular control of the liquor traffic. The Commission had not yet reported, and if it contained any such proposition he only regretted that it had not had better evidence on the subject. It would be very disappointing indeed if the Lord Advocate should be nearly the only Scottish Member to pronounce decisively against the Bill. The state of business in the House was such that a vote on any Bill introduced by a private Member could only amount to an expression of opinion on an abstract resolution, and the most enthusiastic supporters of the Bill would not be likely to expect more. In that position he had no hesitation in giving the Bill his hearty support, but, of course, without committing himself to the machinery proposed or the limits of its operation, nor would he be prevented by his action towards this Bill from giving full consideration to the threefold option contained in another Bill before the House. The present Bill, it might be said, made no provision for the consequences that might follow its adoption. Its leading principles were, however, limitation of licences and prohibition, and it was to be anticipated that it would be most exercised in the first-mentioned direction, and from this there would arise an enormous increase in the value of licences. On the other hand, there was no provision for compensation for licences suppressed. It was, in his opinion, a fatal omission in the complex history of the licensing question that no public claim had been established in

regard to the monopoly value of licences. The duty from licences was comparatively unimportant, and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, in common with his predecessors, had passed by this source of public revenue of vast amount. Why had not temperance reformers seen that this question was to a large extent a financial question? Why had they not insisted that this monopoly value, purely the creation of the State, should go into the pockets of the community? Was it not a scandalous instance of misapplication of public funds resulting from the present system? He thought it was the duty of the Government to lay before the country some approximate estimates of the amount of public money now secured in licences. The honourable Member for Oldham taunted some of them with having voted last night for practically a reduction of the wine duties, but he would remind the House of the great difference between the wine duty and the demand that the full value of licences should be taxed. A tax on a commodity was a tax upon the consumer; an additional tax on licences would not be a burden on anyone. They were entitled to demand that the full worth of the liquor monopoly should be taxed, and he hoped that all temperance men would support that demand. He was not in favour of the tax going to the municipalities, as then it would go to the rich in larger measure than to the poor. There could be no objection to its going to the State. It was the State that ought to have it, and if an investigation were made it would be found they were now deliberately throwing away millions a year of State money, brought into existence by the policy the State had adopted. He would now refer to the question of compensation. It was stated that a licence was only a yearly licence, and that no compensation was due. On the other hand, it was said that there should be compensation for all houses suppressed. He ventured to think there was a certain amount of confusion of ideas in the controversy. It was very difficult to deny that a person, whose business was taken away by Imperial legislation, was entitled to compensation. Suppose it was resolved that the tobacco trade should hereafter be carried on by the State, could it be denied that the tobaccoist, whose shop was taken away, was en-

titled to compensation? What would apply to the tobacconist applied also to the publican, and he was therefore not concerned to deny that the publican whose licence was taken away was entitled to compensation. But what compensation? Just the same compensation that a tradesman who had no monopoly would be entitled to. Let the publican get the full value of his goodwill, deducting, of course, the full value of the State monopoly he now enjoys. That appeared to him a reasonable proposition. He believed that the future of the temperance question would show that it was largely a financial question, and that the taxation of these exceptional values brought into existence by the action of the State itself, was on the same footing as the taxation of land values which had made such remarkable progress during the last few years. He hoped that when both Parties were seeking a new mandate from the country, these two questions would be brought before the electorate, and that a majority would be returned committed to insist on land values bearing their fair share of local taxation, and licences being taxed for the benefit of the State.

Mr. PARKER SMITH (Lanarkshire, Partick) hoped that honourable Members from England and Ireland would remember the different circumstances they had in Scotland. In Scotland the evil was much more serious than in England. In Scotland, liquor was used separately from food as a stimulant or intoxicant. The feeling in Scotland in favour of temperance reform was stronger than in England. He could not, however, assent to the Bill now before the House. The honourable Member for Dundee had spoken of the Bill as if it was simply an abstract resolution in favour of giving localities power to control licences. It was a great deal more than that. There were two great principles put forward by the temperance party; one was local veto, the other the principle of no compensation, and that licences, being precarious and lasting only a year, could be taken away without compensation. Honourable Members voting for the Second Reading of the Bill would therefore be not only voting for local veto, but also against compensation. They should not endeavour to make the country righteous at the cost of the ruin of certain indivi-

duals. To attempt to do so revolted the sense of justice of all parties concerned. Even the minority of Lord Peel's Commission had come to take that view strongly. He introduced last year a Bill entitled the Threefold Option Bill; it contained three alternatives. In all cases it provided that where a licence was taken away from a man through no fault of his own, he should not be punished, and that he should be given compensation in some form, and that if it were a money compensation, it should not be derived from the ratepayers, but from an increased duty upon licences. That was highly approved in many quarters of Scotland. It was supported by the temperance committee of the Church of England and had been strongly approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury, one of the most devoted of temperance advocates. He found it impossible to get the Bill beyond the First Reading, and it was, therefore, never discussed. He hoped it would come home to the minds of temperance advocates in the House that they were in too great a hurry. It was a hurry which, he believed, defeated its own object. If they were only prepared to propose fair terms, and to deal with those whose vital interests were concerned, then he thought they would find a large measure of support. He could not vote against the Bill before the House because of the principle of Local Veto it contained, but he did not find himself able to vote for it.

Mr. THORBURN (Selkirk and Peebles) said he did not take the pessimistic view as regarded drunkenness in Scotland which was taken by the honourable Member who had just spoken. With the exception, perhaps, of one or two large towns, Scotland as a whole had improved immensely. It had been said the Debate was purely academic. He did not suppose that the most ardent supporter of local veto would expect a majority for the Bill, and even if he did, the state of business absolutely prevented it going through. It was remarkable, as far as could be gathered from the public prints, that both the Minority and Majority Reports of the Licensing Commission were rather averse to the principle of the Bill. He had been reading the utterances of many prominent men in connection with the

question, and he found Mr. Gladstone always most distinctly emphasised one point, and that was, they were under a moral obligation to compensate any member of the trade who was dispossessed in the public interest. He had also been reading a speech delivered by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire, who, when Member for Oxford, addressed a meeting in his constituency many years ago. He said—

“There seems to be day by day a growing disposition more and more to invoke the interference of legislation in every department of social life. I believe this to be a most dangerous tendency, and one to which it is necessary to offer resolute and determined resistance. I dare say I shall be told I am the advocate and the apologist of drinking. I care very little for imputations which I know to be unfounded. I am just as much opposed to intemperance as the Permissive Bill gentlemen themselves. But this is not the question. The question is, ‘Can you, or ought you, to put down drinking by legislation?’ That is a very different matter, and I should like to argue it out. It is sometimes said, ‘You cannot make a man sober by Act of Parliament,’ but that is not an accurate way of expressing the matter. You might, of course, make it impossible for any man to get anything to drink, and then, of course, no man could be drunk. Just in the same way you might make an end of all crime by putting everybody into prison. But when you have put your population into prison, you will not have made your population virtuous. No more will you have made a nation moral when you have compelled them to be sober against their will. If there be any Party which is more pledged than another to resist a policy of restrictive legislation, having for its object social coercion, that Party is the Liberal Party. The proud title which it has assumed proclaims the principle on which it is founded to be that of liberty. . . . It is this practice of allowing one set of people to dictate to another set of people what they shall do, what they shall think, what they shall drink, when they shall go to bed, what they shall buy, what wages they shall earn, and how they shall spend them, against which the Liberal Party have always protested. And now, when we have laboured to get rid of one vicious system of legislation, we are invited to set to work to build up another fabric, founded on exactly the same false and vicious basis. We no longer prescribe the course of trade by Act of Parliament, but it seems to me we are to establish protective and prohibitory duties upon the habits of the people. We have removed religious tests of every description, and now we are to have a new set of Thirty-nine Articles for the tavern. The policy of the Liberal Party has been for generations a policy of emancipation from restriction, and if it is now to set to work to forge fresh fetters for the free. I, myself, will have no part in such a perversion. I am against the whole system of petty molestation and irritating dictation, whether by a class or by a majority. I do not

admire the grand-maternal Government which ties night-caps on a grown-up nation by Act of Parliament. I am against putting people to bed who want to sit up. I am against forbidding a man to have a glass of beer if he wants to have a glass of beer. I am against public-house restriction and park regulations. I do not approve of, and took some part in preventing, people being sent to prison for saying how they voted. These are not actions of a Liberal policy, for they are the negation of the principle of liberty. These matters may appear trivial in detail; but, depend upon it, they involve a false theory of government. It is a matter which is growing more and more serious day by day. One set of people want to attack the liberty of individual action in one respect; another set of people want to attack it in another respect; some people want to dictate the conduct of employers, others to impose terms on the unemployed. Some want to meddle with the rights of the owners of public-houses; others to invade the rights of the owners of public houses. The form is different, but the error is the same. Unless we resolutely make a stand against this sort of thing, depend upon it, liberty itself will seriously suffer.”

At one time he had his name on the back of a Local Veto Bill, and it would be quite as justifiable for him to change his views as it had been for the right honourable Gentleman to change his. He was going to explain his own position as regards local veto. When he entered Parliament 13 years ago, at the request of certain local veto promoters he allowed his name to be put on the back of a Bill. The Bill provided that two-thirds majority should decide the question of either restriction or prohibition, but subsequently that provision was altered to a bare majority, whereupon he requested his name to be removed. He had always been, and was still, in favour of well-considered, popular regulations for the liquor traffic, but his first objection to the Bill before the House was that it did not provide anything in the shape of compensation. He had over and over again stated on public platforms that he would never vote for any Measure regulating the liquor traffic which did not provide compensation either in money or by a time limit. His second objection was to the provision that a vote should be taken over a ward area. Another objection was that the two-thirds majority should be two-thirds of all entitled to vote, not a two-thirds majority of all who came to the poll. He thought that if a majority of two-thirds of all the electors on the roll were established, that there would be such a powerful and strong recommendation

of the people that veto would take effect, and he believed when it did it would have a permanent effect. He approved of the principle of popular control, and consequently could not consistently vote against the Bill. On the other hand, as compensation was excluded from the Bill, he was equally precluded from voting for it, and, therefore, he would not vote at all. He had nothing to gain by being in politics. If he were to study his own interests, and count how many votes he would get by voting for or against the Bill, he would vote against it, but he held that an independent Member should be as honest and straightforward in his public duty as he would be in the ordinary everyday affairs of life. He could not, for the sake of sitting in that House, vote for any Bill which his conscience told him was not for the good of the country. He believed that the regulation of the drink traffic was necessary for the well-being of the country, and consequently he had put his name on a Bill which embodied what appeared to his own mind, at all events, to be the most excellent way of dealing with the question.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (*Stirling Burghs*): Perhaps my honourable Friend who has just sat down will allow me to offer him two separate bits of friendly advice. In the first place, I would advise him, when he wishes to bring an elaborate indictment for grave inconsistency against a Member of this House, as he did against my right honourable Friend the Member for West Monmouth, that he should not spoil the effect of it by immediately pointing out that he has himself been even more inconsistent. And, in the second place, I would advise him, as a rule, to avoid putting his name on the back of Bills. It is not only in financial matters that this is sometimes an inconvenient proceeding. If my memory is as sharp as it ought to be, no farther back than last Wednesday the honourable Member's familiar name was on the back of another Scotch Bill—that dealing with Ecclesiastical Assessments, and he then said that there were many details in it with which he altogether disagreed or of which he disapproved. I would suggest to the honourable Member that, under these circumstances, it would be safer for

him to keep out of the practice altogether. I offer my honourable Friend my own example, because I have never, unless it was some official Bill, when I have been in the Government, allowed my name to be put on the back of any Bill since I have been a Member of this House. I prefer very much to criticise other people's Bills. I do not know how the honourable Member for Partick will vote, but at any rate he has his name on the back of a Bill which includes as two or three alternatives to be put before a community the very propositions which are complained of in the present Measure, while the House has heard from the honourable Baronet the Member for Kirkcudbright that he himself has actually put the principle of the Bill in practice on his own estate. I daresay, if I could go farther among Scotch Members on the other side of the House, I should find other scraps of support either of a negative or positive character. What I wish to impress upon the House is that we are dealing with a Scotch Bill and not an English Bill. I say that not only because the operation of the Bill being confined to Scotland we ought surely to be guided by Scotch opinion and not by English or Irish opinion, but also on the more definite ground that Scotland is greatly in advance of England in respect of temperance legislation. The honourable Member for Partick said that there was more drunkenness in Scotland than in England. I am not so sure of that; but whether there is or not, it would have been a great deal worse had it not been for the legislation we already have in the interest of temperance in Scotland. It was in 1857 that the Act which we know as the Forbes-Mackenzie Act, introducing Sunday Closing into Scotland, was passed into law. We have had working for 42 years in that Act a principle which is hardly yet in the range of practical politics in England. Scotland has also had a shortening of the hours of opening of public-houses and other restrictions. Although I cannot say that 40 years ago I was a very diligent student of political matters, I distinctly remember the passing of the Forbes-Mackenzie Act, and it is most curious to note that all the arguments with which we are familiar against local option and prohibition, and against any thorough-going temperance reform, were in full blaze in 1857 against the adoption of the Forbes-

Mackenzie Act, and were used with great force. And certain leading journals then, as now, poured ridicule and wrath upon the advocates of temperance reform, and used the arguments of tyranny, of the majority compelling the habits of the minority, and of the interference with the vested rights. But having seen the actual working and effect of that Measure, we know what those protests are worth. Is there, I ask, a single man of any shade of politics in Scotland, or belonging to any of the divisions into which opinion is formed in Scotland, who would repeal, or suggest the repeal, of the Forbes-Mackenzie Act, in order to throw open the public-houses in Scotland on Sunday and lengthen the hours? No, not one. I do not, therefore, think we need be alarmed at the strong opposition which in some limited quarters this Bill and its proposals are receiving. This is not in the least degree a Party question in Scotland. That is proved by the fact that it is supported by several Members on the other side of the House. The truth is that we are all aware that the drunkenness which prevails in Scotland, and the facilities for the sale of liquor, cause to our country a terrible evil and a terrible disgrace. I am glad to say that I think we can all recognise a very great improvement in the habits generally of large classes in Scotland. I think there is a quickening of the sense of disgrace attached to drunkenness which was not formerly so keenly felt. For that very reason there is a greater earnestness in the effort to save those people who are most exposed to the temptation of drink. The question raised in this Bill is simply this—whether the people in the locality should have the control of the matter? All the details after that—whether it should be by a poll or by the election of a board, what the conditions and restrictions should be, and the question of compensation—come after the acceptance of the main principle of whether the people themselves should have the determination of the matter. Undoubtedly there are great errors and faults in the present system which this Bill does not touch. There are the evils which arise from the constitution of the licensing authority, and from the power of appeal from those who know all about the case to those who know nothing about it—an appeal which, in many cases, has

worked so entirely against the diminution or refusal of licences. That, I believe, has had a paralysing effect upon even the action of the police, who know that it is no use bringing forward cases of contravention, as they would lead to no result in consequence of this appeal. There is also the abuse referred to by my honourable Friend the Member for Dundee, which has shocked public opinion to a great extent—namely, the fictitious value given to public-house property by the monopoly which has been practically conferred upon those in the trade. These are points which can be dealt with otherwise than by a Bill of this sort, and which really lie outside its scope. The local popular power is the keystone of this legislation, and we are ready for it in Scotland. We are not afraid of it. The circumstances of Scotland and England are very different in the matter of drink consumption. In England for the most part drink is taken as a matter of diet with a man's meals; whereas in Scotland it is a stimulant which can be kept without damage if anyone had enough strength of mind to keep it. I remember that in one of the Debates on the Irish Sunday Closing Bill, the late Professor Smythe, then a Member of this House, said that in England, where beer was drunk, if a man took home a pot of beer on the Saturday night it was not much to his taste on the Sunday; but if an Irishman took home a bottle of whisky on the Saturday night and it did not keep until the Monday it was not the fault of the whisky. That is a substantial reason for the difference between the two countries. I am bound frankly to say, although I am thereby finding fault with my own conduct as a Member of the Cabinet, that I think it would have been very much wiser and more effective if the late Government had confined their action in this matter to Scotland, and brought forward a Local Veto Bill for that country, where the people are prepared to receive it and would be glad to work it. Then, when we had had, as I believe we would have had, the favourable experience of some years in Scotland, we might have trusted to some influence being brought to bear upon the opinion of England. We are told with regard to this Bill that we should wait until we have before us the findings of the Royal Commission. We heard vaguely what the

views of the Royal Commission were likely to be, and I trust that, notwithstanding the considerable amount of confusion among the opinions expressed by its members, there may be some substantial results from its labours. But we are not going to wait for the results of the labours of the Royal Commission for a definite purpose of this sort. What has been our experience of Commissions? In 1878 a strongly-constituted Commission sat upon the question of licensing in Scotland. This Commission recommended the abolition of grocers' licences, and made 17 distinct recommendations for improvements in the licensing system, not one of which has yet been carried into effect. Therefore, with such an experience in the matter, we are not going to be damped in our zeal for pushing on the Bill now before the House. I would ask the House to consider this as a Scotch Measure, to deal with it, not to please Scotch Members, but as Scotch business affecting the interests of the people of Scotland, to be decided by Scotch opinion and Scotch circumstances, and leave the determination of this important administrative matter in the hands of those whose individual, personal, and family comfort, as well as the general well-being of the community, are so largely affected.

THE LORD ADVOCATE said this Bill had been brought in and backed and had been chiefly supported by Gentlemen whose only common bond, he supposed, was that they belonged to what was commonly known as the temperance Party. He was quite aware that the honourable Baronet explained that he thought that was a phrase which had been rather given them by their opponents than their friends, and said they were all temperance men. They all were very glad to accept his assurance on that point. At the same time, it was quite evident there was not only a great deal of difference of opinion everywhere, but even a great deal of difference among those who had spoken to the House that day. They all knew the honourable Baronet's views. He had always thought what the honourable Baronet wanted would be the working of the first miracle the other way. If he could only turn wine, including beer and spirits, into water, he believed he would die happy. That difference of

opinion was of considerable importance, because he (the Lord Advocate) had experienced difficulty, not in finding out what was the principle of the Bill, but what was the theory of the Bill. He wanted to know, was it put forward as a temperance Measure? He was very much struck by the speech of the honourable Member for Govan, who moved the Second Reading of the Bill. There was not a single attempt in that speech to show that if the Bill passed it would help the cause of temperance. The honourable Member might think it would, but he did not think it necessary to argue that it would. The honourable Member based his plea for the reception of the Bill upon the ground that it was wanted by a majority of the Scotch Members, and also especially upon the fact that there had been a great many plebiscites in Scotland. The honourable Member quoted statistics which, however, showed that only a minute fraction of the constituencies in each case responded to the invitation of the postcard. The figures in Edinburgh were a minute fraction of the Edinburgh ratepayers. After all, that was not remarkable, because it rather reflected upon the means provided in the Bill. If that had been their experience in plebiscites, what would have been their experience in this election which was suddenly to be forced upon them—not sooner than one week, but not later than three weeks after it had been requisitioned—and which election might be repeated at very early periods? The seconder of the Bill, the honourable Member for Lanarkshire, went upon completely different lines. He said that local veto was a great success, and quoted statistics, which he hoped bore out his view, from the practice of the United States and Canada. He (the Lord Advocate) need not say that these statistics were entirely denied by the honourable Member for St. Rollox, who moved the rejection of the Bill.

MR. COLVILLE rose.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I am afraid I cannot give way; I have no time.

MR. COLVILLE: On a point of order, I must correct the right honourable Gentleman.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! There is no point of order. The right honourable Gentleman is in possession of the House, and he does not give way.

THE LORD ADVOCATE said that the point he wished to make was that the honourable Member for Lanarkshire said that the existing system of licensing was a rotten one, and quoted instance after instance in which he thought the decisions of local persons had been overruled by justices of the peace sitting in Quarter Sessions. What he (the Lord Advocate) had to point out was that that was a perfectly different view. The mover of the Bill held that the Bill did not touch the licensing system, and when the seconder came he said that the use of the Bill was to give them something else than the present rotten system. Honourable Members opposite had, therefore, not quite settled among themselves exactly what it was they wanted. Did they look upon the question of licensing as more or less a judicial determination of a certain thing? They knew perfectly well that, according to the present licensing law, what the bench had to consider was whether there was a need for the premises, whether the premises were suitable, and the suitability of the applicant who asked for the licence. If this was a judicial question to be determined, he thought that probably the very worst body they could give it to was a popular body—to the snatch vote of a popular body. He did not know that there was any better demonstration of that than the very interesting speech, to which he might be allowed to add his humble meed of admiration, of the honourable Member who addressed the House for the first time. He showed clearly he was in favour of a licensing board, and he thought it was a judicial question, and that the worst persons to decide it would be popularly-elected persons. If it was not a judicial question, if it was a question whether the people in a certain locality wanted it or not, even in the interests of temperance they were bound to show that the effect of giving legislation as proposed in this Bill would be a real advantage to the cause of temperance. It was controversial whether local veto would, or would not, be a help to the cause of temperance. The Bill was crammed full of defects. Certainly the framers of the

Bill seemed to have learnt nothing from the discussion upon a Bill of this sort, for, after all, this Bill was very much the Bill which was proposed by the late Government in the year 1895. Anyone who had read, as he had, the speech of the Member for Plymouth on that occasion, would find ample material for criticising the provisions of this Bill. One resolution was not prohibitive entirely, but was to reduce the licences, and if that Resolution was carried the licences were to be reduced to three-quarters. There was absolutely no guide as to what quarter of licences was to be taken out. The influences that were brought to bear now would be as nothing to the influence that would be brought on the point of what quarter of licences were to go, and the real crucial point for A., B., and C. was, Is your licence to go or is mine? He noticed also that honourable Members were not at all at one as to whether the practical effect of this Bill would be that there would be this diminishing resolution or total prohibition. The point he made was that when they had to support this Bill, not upon a reform of licensing, but upon the ground of being a real step in the direction of temperance, that depended upon very different questions upon which light might be thrown by experience, and as to which they were surely entitled to have the experience of the Commission now sitting. It was for that reason he would vote against the Bill, not because he was necessarily pronouncing against the principle, but because he thought it dealt with only one fringe of the subject. It did not touch licensing; it did not touch clubs; it did not touch illicit forms of selling drink; but it asked them to accept, he would not say a panacea, but as a real step in the direction of temperance, a particular form of prohibition by local veto, as to which there was a great diversity of opinion, and as to which diversity of opinion there was a Commission sitting, for whose judgment they ought surely to wait. For these reasons he should vote against the Bill.

Question put—

“That the word ‘now’ stand part of the Question.”

The House divided:—Ayes 143; Noes 217.—(Division List No. 113.)

AYES.

Allison, Robert Andrew
 Asher, Alexander
 Ashton, Thomas Gair
 Aquith, Rt. Hn. H. Henry
 Atherley-Jones, L.
 Bainbridge, Emerson
 Baker, Sir John
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. J.B. (Clackm.)
 Barlow, John Emmott
 Bayley, Thos. (Derbyshire)
 Billson, Alfred
 Birrell, Augustine
 Blake, Edward
 Bolton, Thomas Dolling
 Brunner, Sir J. Tomlinson
 Bryce, Rt. Hn. James
 Buchanan, Thos. Ryburn
 Burns, John
 Burt, Thomas
 Caldwell, James
 Cameron, Sir C. (Glasgow)
 Cameron, Robert (Durham)
 Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
 Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson-
 Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)
 Clough, Walter Owen
 Corbett, A. C. (Glasgow)
 Courtney, Rt. Hon. L. H.
 Crombie, John William
 Cross, Alex. (Glasgow)
 Dalziel, Jas. Henry
 Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
 Douglas, C. M. (Lanark)
 Duckworth, James
 Dunn, Sir William
 Ellis, John Edward
 Evans, Sir F. H. (South'ton)
 Farquharson, Dr. Robert
 Fenwick, Charles
 Ferguson, R. C. M. (Leith)
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
 Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir H.
 Gourley, Sir E. Temperley
 Haldane, Richard Burdon
 Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm.
 Hayne, Rt. Hon. C. Seale-
 Hazell, Walter
 Hedderwick, T. C. H.
 Hemphill, Rt. Hon. C. H.

Holden, Sir Angus
 Holland, Wm. H. (York, W.R.)
 Horniman, Fredk. John
 Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C
 Hutton, Alfred E. (Morley)
 Jacoby, James Alfred
 Johnston, W. (Belfast)
 Joicey, Sir James
 Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)
 Jones, W. (Carnarvonshire)
 Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.
 Kearley, Hudson E.
 Kinloch, Sir J. Geo. Smyth
 Kitson, Sir James
 Labouchere, Henry
 Lambert, George
 Langley, Batty
 Lawson, Sir W. (Cumb'land)
 Leng, Sir John
 Leuty, T. Richmond
 Lewis, John Herbert
 Lloyd-George, David
 Logan, John William
 Lyell, Sir Leonard
 McArthur, W. (Cornwall)
 McGhee, Richard
 McKenna, Reginald
 McKillop, James
 Maddison, Fred.
 Maden, John Henry
 Mappin, Sir Frederick T.
 Mellor, Rt. Hn. J.W. (Yorks.)
 Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
 Molloy, Bernard Charles
 Montagu, Sir S. (Whitechapel)
 Morgan, J. L. (Carmarthen)
 Morley, C. (Baconshire)
 Morley, Rt. Hn. J. (Montrose)
 Moss, Samuel
 Moulton, John Fletcher
 Norton, Capt. Cecil William
 O'Connor, A. (Donegal)
 Oldroyd, Mark
 O'Neill, Hon. R. Torrens
 Palmer, Sir C. M. (Durham)
 Palmer, Geo. W. (Reading)
 Paulton, James Mellor
 Pease, Alfred E. (Cleveland)
 Pease, J. A. (Northumb.)

Pease, Sir J. W. (Durham)
 Philipps, John Wynford
 Pickard, Benjamin
 Pirie, Duncan V.
 Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
 Randall, David
 Reckitt, Harold James
 Reid, Sir R. Threshie
 Rentoul, James Alexander
 Richardson, J. (Durham)
 Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
 Roberts, J. H. (Denbighs.)
 Robertson, E. (Dundee)
 Robson, Wm. Snowdon
 Russell, T. W. (Tyronne)
 Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
 Schwann, Charles E.
 Scott, C. Prestwich (Leigh)
 Shaw, T. (Hawick Burghs)
 Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
 Smith, Samuel (Flint)
 Souttar, Robinson
 Spicer, Albert
 Stanhope, Hon. P. J.
 Steadman, Wm. Charles
 Stevenson, Francis S.
 Stuart, J. (Shoreditch)
 Sullivan, D. (Westmeath)
 Tennant, Harold John
 Thomas, A. (Carmarthen, E.)
 Thomas, A. (Glamorgan, E.)
 Thomas, David A. (Merthyr)
 Trevelyan, Charles Philips
 Ure, Alexander
 Wallace, Robt. (Perth)
 Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
 Wedderburn, Sir William
 Weir, James Galloway
 Wills, Sir Wm. Henry
 Wilson, J. (Durham, Mid.)
 Wilson, J.W. (Worcestershire N.)
 Wilson, J.H. (Middlebrough)
 Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
 Woodall, William
 Woods, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
 Mr. John Wilson (Govan)
 and Mr. Colville.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
 Allhusen, Augustus H. Eden
 Allsopp, Hon. George
 Anstruther, H. T.
 Archdale, Edw. Mervyn
 Arrol, Sir William
 Ascroft, Robert
 Austin, Sir John (Yorks.)
 Austin, M. (Limerick, W.)
 Bagot, Capt. J. FitzRoy
 Bailey, James (Waltham)
 Baillie, J. E. B. (Inverness)
 Baird, John G. Alexander
 Balcarres, Lord
 Baldwin, Alfred
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
 Balfour, Rt. Hn. G.W. (Leeds)
 Banbury, Fredk. George
 Barnes, Frederic Gorell

Barry, Rt. Hn. A.H. Smith- (Hunts)
 Barry, Sir F. T. (Windsor)
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Bathurst, Hon. A. Benjamin
 Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M.H. (Bristol)
 Beach, W. W. B. (Hants.)
 Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
 Beresford, Lord Charles
 Bhowaggee, Sir M. M.
 Bond, Edward
 Bonsor, H. Cosmo Orme
 Bowles, Capt. H.F. (Middlesex)
 Bowles, T. G. (King's Lynn)
 Brassey, Albert
 Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
 Brown, Alexander H.
 Butcher, John George
 Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
 Cecil, E. (Hertford, E.)

Cecil, Lord R. (Greenwich)
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm.)
 Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Chelsea, Viscount
 Clancy, John Joseph
 Clare, Octavius Leigh
 Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
 Coddington, Sir William
 Coghill, Douglas Harry
 Cohen, Benjamin Louis
 Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
 Colston, C. E. H. Athole
 Compton, Lord Alwyne
 Cooke, C. W. R. (Hereford)
 Cornwallis, Fiennes S. W.
 Cotton-Jodrell, Col. E. T. D.
 Cranborne, Viscount
 Cripps, Charles Alfred
 Cross, H. Shepherd (Bolton)

Cubitt, Hon. Henry
 Curran, Thos. (Sligo, S.)
 Curzon, Viscount
 Dalbiac, Col. Philip H.
 Dalkeith, Earl of
 Dalrymple, Sir Charles
 Daly, James
 Denny, Colonel
 Dickson-Poynder, Sir J. P.
 Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
 Dorington, Sir J. Edward
 Doughty, George
 Douglas-Pennant, Hon. E.S.
 Doxford, William Theodore
 Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
 Egerton, Hn. A. de Tatton
 Elliot, Hon. A. R. Douglass
 Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edw.
 Fergusson, Rt. Hon. Sir J. (Manc'r
 Field, Admiral (Eastbourne)
 Finch, George H.
 Finlay, Sir Robt. Bannatyne
 Fisher, William Hayes
 Fison, Fredk. William
 Fitz Wygram, Gen. Sir F.
 Flower, Ernest
 Folkestone, Viscount
 Forster, Henry William
 Garfit, William
 Gedge, Sydney
 Gibbons, J. Lloyd
 Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H. (C. of Lond.)
 Giles, Charles Tyrrell
 Gilliat, John Saunders
 Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
 Gold, Charles
 Goldsworthy, Major-General
 Gordon, Hon. J. Edward
 Goschen, Geo. J. (Sussex)
 Goulding, Edward Alfred
 Graham, Henry Robert
 Green, W. D. (Wednesbury)
 Greene, H. D. (Shrewsbury)
 Gretton, John
 Gull, Sir Cameron
 Gunter, Col.
 Hall, Rt. Hn. Sir Chas.
 Halsey, Thomas Fredk.
 Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Lord G.
 Helder, Augustus
 Hill, Rt. Hn. A. S. (Staffs.)
 Hill, Sir E. Stock (Bristol)
 Hoare, E. B. (Hampstead)
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
 Holland, Hon. L. R. (Bow)

Howard, Joseph
 Howell, William Tudor
 Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
 Hudson, George Bickersteth
 Hutchinson, Capt. G. W. Grice-
 Jackson, Rt. Hon. W. Lawies
 Jeffreys, A. Frederick
 Johnson-Ferguson, J. E.
 Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
 Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
 Kenyon, James
 Keswick, William
 King, Sir Henry Seymour
 Knowles, Lees
 Laurie, Lieut.-General
 Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks.)
 Lees, Sir Elliott (Birkenhead)
 Leigh-Bennett, H. Currie
 Leighton, Stanley
 Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Long, Col. C. W. (Evesham)
 Long, Rt. Hn. W. (Liverpool)
 Lopes, Henry Y. Buller
 Lorne, Marquess of
 Lowe, Francis William
 Lowther, Rt. Hon. J. (Kent)
 Loyd, Archie Kirkman
 Macaleese, Daniel
 Macartney, W. G. Ellison
 Macdona, John Cumming
 Macduro, Sir John William
 McCalmont, H. L. B. (Cambs.)
 McDermott, Patrick
 Malcolm, Ian
 Maple, Sir John Blundell
 Maxwell, Rt. Hon. Sir H. E.
 Mellor, Col. (Lancashire)
 Melville, Beresford V.
 Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
 Milbank, Sir Powlett C. J.
 Milward, Colonel Victor
 Monckton, Edward Philip
 Monk, Charles James
 Morgan, Hn. F. (Monm'thsh.)
 Morrison, Walter
 Morton, A. H. A. (Deptford)
 Muntz, Philip A.
 Murray, Rt. Hn. A. G. (Bute)
 Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
 Newdigate, Francis Alexander
 Northcote, Hon. Sir H. S.
 O'Connor, J. (Wicklow, W.)
 Pease, H. Pike (Darlington)
 Phillpotts, Capt. Arthur
 Pierpoint, Robert

Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
 Pretymman, Ernest George
 Priestley, Sir W. O. (Edin.)
 Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edw.
 Purvis, Robert
 Pym, C. Guy
 Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
 Renshaw, Charles Bine
 Richards, Henry Charles
 Richardson, Sir F. (Hartlep'l)
 Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
 Rothschild, Hon. Lionel W.
 Ryder, J. Herbert Dudley
 Samuel, H. S. (Limehouse)
 Savory, Sir Joseph
 Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
 Seely, Charles Hilton
 Sharpe, William Edw. T.
 Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renfrew)
 Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
 Sidebottom, T. H. (Stalybr.)
 Sidebottom, W. (Derbysh.)
 Simeon, Sir Barrington
 Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
 Spencer, Ernest
 Stanley, Hon. A. (Ormakirk)
 Stanley, Edw. J. (Somerset)
 Stanley, H. M. (Lambeth)
 Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
 Strutt, Hon. C. Hedley
 Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd U.)
 Usborne, Thomas
 Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. H.
 Walrond, Rt. Hn. Sir W. H.
 Ward, Hon. R. A. (Crews)
 Warner, T. Courtenay T.
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
 Welby, Lt.-Col. A. C. E.
 Wharton, Rt. Hn. J. Lloyd
 Whiteley, Geo. (Stockport)
 Whiteley, H. (Ashton-under-L.)
 Whitmore, Chas. Algernon
 Willox, Sir John Archibald
 Wilson-Todd, W. H. (Yorks.)
 Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
 Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
 Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
 Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
 Young, Samuel, (Cavan, E.)
 Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
 Mr. Faithfull Begg and Mr.
 Duncombe.

Main Question, as amended, put, and
 agreed to:—Second Reading put off for
 six months.

BUSINESS DEFERRED.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT (1897) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thurs-
 day 1st June.

SUCCESSION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
 day 7th June.

GROCERS' LICENCES (SCOTLAND) ABOLITION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday
 2nd June.

SUPPLY.

Committee deferred till Friday.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Friday.

TEMPERANCE REFORM (THREEFOLD
OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday
2nd June.

GROUND VALUES (TAXATION)
(SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day 7th June.

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND) ACTS
AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day 28th June.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day 17th May.

WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day 31st May.

BUILDING FEES AND LEASES
(SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day next.

TRUCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday
next.

BANKRUPTCY ACT (1883) AMENDMENT
BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day next.

UNIVERSITY OF WALES (GRADUATES)
BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day next.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTORATE
(SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day next.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT
(1886) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day next.

OLD-AGE PROVIDENT PENSIONS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day 28th June.

OUT-DOOR PROVIDENT RELIEF BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day 28th June.

HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES ACT (1891)
AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day next.

WILD BIRDS PROTECTION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday
next.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day next.

WORKMEN'S HOUSES TENURE BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednes-
day next.

CORONERS' INQUESTS (RAILWAY
FATALITIES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday
12th June.

MERCHANT SEAMEN (RATING
CERTIFICATES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-
morrow.

House adjourned at forty-five
minutes after Five of the clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday 4th May 1899.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat upon the Woolsack at fifteen minutes past Four of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

HASTINGS CORPORATION TRAMWAYS BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That it is not expedient to proceed further with the Bill; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

WITHINGTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL (TRAMWAYS) BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, no parties having appeared in opposition thereto; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on the 27th of February and the 25th of April last discharged; and Bill committed.

STRET福德 URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL (TRAMWAYS) BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, no parties having appeared in opposition thereto; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on the 27th of February and the 25th of April last discharged; and Bill committed.

FURNESS RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on the 10th of March and the 25th of April last discharged; and Bill committed.

LONDON HOSPITAL BILL [H.L.]
Reported with amendments.BURLEY-IN-WHARFEDALE URBAN DISTRICT WATER BILL.
Reported with amendments.LIVERPOOL OVERHEAD RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]
Reported with amendments.ILFORD GAS BILL.
Reported with amendments.HAMPSTEAD CHURCH (EMMANUEL, WEST END) BILL [H.L.]
Committee to meet To-morrow.ST. JAMES'S AND PALL MALL ELECTRIC LIGHT BILL.
Committee to meet on Monday next.LLANELLY HARBOUR AND PONTARDULAIS RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]
Report from the Select Committee, That it is not expedient to proceed further with the Bill; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RAWTENSTALL CORPORATION WATER BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee, That it is not expedient to proceed further with the Bill; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

BEXHILL AND ST. LEONARDS TRAMROADS BILL [H.L.]

A witness ordered to attend the Select Committee, and to produce documents.

CLYDE NAVIGATION BILL [H.L.]
Read third time, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

BARTON-ON-SEA WATER BILL [H.L.]

Read third time, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

ILFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL
(RATES) BILL.

Read third time, and passed.

GREAT NORTHERN AND STRAND
RAILWAY BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read first time; and referred to the Examiners.

LONDON, BRIGHTON, AND SOUTH-COAST
RAILWAY (PENSIONS) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read first time; and referred to the Examiners.

SHOTLEY BRIDGE AND CONSETT
DISTRICT GAS BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read first time; and referred to the Examiners.

ABERDEEN HARBOUR BILL [H.L.]

Returned from the Commons agreed to.

HERNE BAY WATER BILL [H.L.]

Returned from the Commons agreed to.

WALTON-ON-THAMES AND WEYBRIDGE
GAS BILL [H.L.]

Returned from the Commons agreed to.

CROWBOROUGH DISTRICT GAS BILL.

Returned from the Commons with the amendments agreed to.

ST. DAVID'S WATER AND GAS BILL.

Returned from the Commons with the amendments agreed to.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE (NOTIFICATION)
ACT (1889) EXTENSION BILL.

Second Reading (which stands appointed for this day) put off to Tuesday next.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVISIONAL
ORDER CONFIRMATION (ABERAVON,
ETC.) BILL [H.L.]

Read third time (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

METROPOLITAN POLICE PROVISIONAL
ORDER BILL.

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without amendment: Standing Committee negatived: and Bill to be read third time To-morrow.

LINCOLNSHIRE CORONERS BILL [H.L.]

Committee of the Whole House (which stands appointed for this day) put off to Tuesday next.

PETITION.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (BOROUGH
FUNDS) ACT, 1872.

Petitions for amendment of; of the Corporation of Barrow-in-Furness—and of the Millom Urban District Council—Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

REPORTS.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

General Reports by the Chief Inspectors of the Northern and Western Divisions of Scotland for the year 1898: Presented (by command) and ordered to lie on the Table.

EDUCATION COMMISSIONERS (IRELAND).

Annual Report for the year 1898: Presented (by command) and ordered to lie on the Table.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.**THE MONEY-LENDING BILL.**

VISCOUNT KNOTSFORD: I should like to ask the noble Lord the Chancellor of the Duchy whether he is aware that in the Money-Lending Bill which was circulated yesterday a very important Amendment, which I had the honour to introduce, and which the noble Lord accepted, was omitted?

LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD: The noble Viscount is quite right. The Bill was circulated with his Amendment and another very important Amendment omitted. The Amendments were very numerous and complicated, and these omissions were an accident, which might occur to the most careful person. Still, I much regret that they should have occurred, but the moment the error was discovered steps were taken to correct it. A new edition of the Bill, with the noble Viscount's Amendment included, has been printed and circulated.

LICENSING (DISQUALIFICATION OF JUSTICES REMOVAL) BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That this Bill be read a second time."—
(*Lord Cranworth.*)

LORD CRANWORTH: My Lords, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, I should like to explain that its object is to provide that a justice of the peace shall not be disqualified from acting for any purpose under the Licensing Acts of 1872-74, or under any Act which may for the time being be in force for regulating the sale of intoxicating liquors or the granting of licences for such sale, by reason of his holding any share or being otherwise interested, whether beneficially or otherwise, in any railway company, which is a retailer of liquor in the licensing district or in the district or districts adjoining to that in which such justice usually acts, or who is wholly or partly the owner, lessee, or occupier of any licensed premises. It is a very small Bill, but it has some importance in agricultural districts where the disqualification of justices has caused very considerable inconvenience. The Bill has been previously passed by

the House without opposition, and I trust your Lordships will give the Measure a Second Reading.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (The EARL of HALSBURY): As I am interested in the case of the Magistrates, I must say that this is a very proper Bill to be passed by your Lordships' House. The very minute interest which it may be supposed a person has in any matter of this kind because he happens to have a share in a railway company ought not to be a subject of qualification. It seems to me to be carrying a question of interest to a ridiculous extent. Undoubtedly it has caused considerable inconvenience in various districts, and I trust your Lordships will give a Second Reading to this Bill.

Question put.

Bill read a second time.

SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That this Bill be read a second time."—
(*The Earl of Lauderdale.*)

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE: My Lords, this is a Bill which has passed through the other House of Parliament without any opposition whatever, and it falls to my lot to submit it to your Lordships. The Bill provides that in all rooms of a shop, warehouse, or other premises where goods are actually retailed to the public, and where female assistants are employed for the retailing of goods to the public, the employer carrying on business in such premises shall provide seats behind the counter and in the show-rooms, or in such other place as an inspector under this Act may direct, for the use of the assistants employed by him, and such seats shall be in the proportion of not less than one seat to every two assistants employed in each room. Under the Bill any person failing to comply with these provisions is liable, on summary conviction, for a first offence to a fine not exceeding £3, and for a second or subsequent offence to a fine not less than £1 and not exceeding £5. The third clause enacts that it shall extend to Scotland only,

and the fourth clause provides that it shall be read and construed as one with the Shop Hours Acts 1892 to 1895.

*LORD SHAND: My Lords, I think I may truly say that, although I have had the honour of a seat in this House for a number of years, I have not often intruded upon the House or occupied your Lordships' time by taking part in discussions on matters of general business. On the present occasion, however, I cannot allow this Bill to pass without comment, and, indeed, protest. Having got it this afternoon and given it my best consideration, I have come to the conclusion that on several grounds it is one that the House should not allow to pass its Second Reading. I often sympathise with the noble Earl on the Cross Benches (the Earl of Wemyss) in his efforts to preserve liberty of action in our daily life, to avoid legislation imposing harassing restrictions, and to prevent improper interference with liberty of contract. I confess I did not agree with my noble Friend with reference to the Money-Lending Bill, for I was strongly of opinion, as many of your Lordships were, that in regard to that particular matter there was a crying evil—that young men who were utterly unacquainted with business were taken advantage of, and that in money transactions there was a great deal of what may be popularly called the "spider and the fly," which it was necessary to deal with by legislation. I think, with the Amendments we have adopted, that we have in the Money-Lending Bill a Measure that will be of great value to the country. The Bill now before your Lordships is one of a wholly different character. I hope I shall not be credited with any want of sympathy with female shop assistants, for whom it is proposed to provide the means of sitting down in their daily occupations. But the questions I would like the House to consider are these: Assuming that the evil exists, is this a proper remedy; and, in the second place, is the subject of such magnitude that we should have the two Houses of Parliament passing a Bill dealing with it? The noble Earl behind me said the Bill was passed without opposition by the House of Commons. The fact is the Bill has passed without

any notice in that House, for no discussion whatever took place upon it. I suppose it came on after midnight, and some honourable Member lifted his hat, and the Bill was passed. I am surprised to find that the Bill is to be applied to Scotland only, and I would ask the noble Earl who has moved the Second Reading of the Bill why Scotland should be singled out for this invidious distinction. Is it for a moment contended that this is an evil which does not equally exist in England or in Ireland? If that contention be maintained, I dispute it. But I am afraid that it is just one of those cases in which a Measure is to be applied to Scotland as an experiment. The idea probably is that it could be extended later on to England and Ireland. If this is a good Measure it ought surely to apply to the whole kingdom. I do not think the subject is one for legislation at all. If there is an evil, public opinion will meet it and put it right. Let those who are interested in the shop assistants call meetings and make representations to the employers. I am sure that voluntary effort will put matters of this kind right. If the evil exists, it is not too much to expect that ladies will make known their sympathy with the shop assistants, and withdraw their support from the shops where anything which can be regarded in the nature of cruelty is allowed, and so the evil would be cured. Such a matter of detail should not be made the subject of legislation. I could understand, though I should not invite, a general Bill which gave the Home Secretary power to interfere, in many matters of trade, for the comfort and safety of the employees, and gave him power to pass a regulation of this kind, but if the discomfort of shop assistants is to be made the subject of legislation I do not know where it will stop. I am fully acquainted with the climate of Scotland. Very often in the morning when people go to their business the weather is fine and bright, but later in the day and unexpectedly there comes a heavy rainfall. If this legislation is adopted we shall probably have a Bill to compel employers to provide their servants with mackintoshes, goloshes, and umbrellas. I do not know whether this is to be made a Government Bill, or whether it is to receive Government sup-

port. I, however, appeal to the noble Marquess at the head of the Government to leave this an open question, and if he should consent to do so I will take it upon myself to move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (the Marquess of SALISBURY): I confess I knew nothing of this Bill before I came to this House, and I was not aware that such a Bill was passing through the other House of Parliament. I was very much struck by the observation of my noble Friend behind me, that this was at once too small and too large a Bill to be adopted without very much more careful examination. It is not necessary to say that it is a very small Bill for Parliament to legislate upon. But besides that, it is in its effect and ultimate purport a very large Bill, because it is introducing us to an entirely new field of legislation which may carry us exceedingly far. In such matters as facility for standing up and sitting down, we have hitherto trusted to the instincts of humanity, believing that people could manage them themselves. But if we were to say that they ought to sit down, and to see that proper opportunities are provided for sitting down when they desire, I do not see the logical process by which we should confine it to warehouses and shops where female assistants are engaged in retailing goods to the public. The image of the housemaid crosses my mind. How often she must desire to sit down! Are you prepared to have an army of inspectors to examine the house of every householder to see that there are a sufficient number of chairs placed at stated intervals, so that at each moment of exhaustion the housemaid may sit down in comfort? I am afraid you will find you have undertaken more work than you can do. I have every sympathy with those assistants—and certainly there are no more in Scotland than in other places—who suffer from the want of consideration and kindness of their employers in this and other respects. I look for the only safe and only effective cure of such evils to the gradual working of civilised opinion, which is carrying the duty of philanthropy more and more to the hearts of every class. And I think you will do more wisely to trust yourselves

to that, but, at all events, do not allow this Bill to slip through as an unconsidered thing. It is the sanction of a principle which will call for your consideration in other matters, and will produce great embarrassment. If we are to do it, at least let us have an inquiry into the matter. There has been no inquiry whatever. Let us ascertain if the shopwomen of Scotland require more sitting down than the shopwomen of England. Let us understand on what grounds this very exceptional adoption of a very far-reaching principle has been introduced in this silent, and what I might also say, surreptitious manner. I do not think, without in the least prejudicing any views which on further investigation we may take, it is right to make so large a breach in the principles by which we have hitherto conducted our legislation without much more care and inquiry than has hitherto been given to the subject. So, if my noble Friend divides the House, I shall be compelled to go with him.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That this Bill be read a second time this day six months.”—(*Lord Shand.*)

LORD SHAND: After what has fallen from the noble Marquess, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time this day six months.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE: After the observation of the noble Marquess; I see no other course open to me but to let the Bill drop.

Question put.

Bill rejected without a Division.

THE HEALTH OF THE TROOPS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

LORD MENDIP (Viscount CLIFDEN): My Lords, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to keep Ladysmith as a military station, seeing the general insanitary state of the place. A very few words will, I think, suffice to explain my object in placing this Question on the Paper. There has been a great deal of sickness among the troops in Natal, and I am sorry to say, from what I hear, that this is unnecessary sickness. Under date March 4, I am

informed that there are at present 116 cases of typhoid fever at Ladysmith out of a total of 1,800 men. Since November there have been 136 cases and 28 deaths from typhoid, mainly due to bad sanitary arrangement, and to the polluted water supply. The principal medical officer has also reported that the huts are too close together, and that the only way to remedy this defect would be to destroy alternate huts. That, of course, means expense, and it is very difficult to get Her Majesty's Government to agree to incur it. I will read to your Lordships a short extract from a local paper, which will explain the present condition of things—

"In town this season, so far, there have been only seven cases of enteric fever, and only one fatal result. In the camp there have been at least 18 deaths from this cause alone. This of itself is sufficient proof that the sanitary conditions there are by no means perfect. The state of the drainage at the married quarters, which I commented on yesterday, is very bad, the majority of the refuse of all kinds running into dongas only a matter of 200 yards from the camp. These dongas fill up, and every rain washes the overflow back towards the camp. Beyond those dongas, in Watercress Spruit, about one mile from the camp, the water is disgracefully polluted. It seems that the night-soil and stable litter is carried across the spruit, and the droppings from the carts alone would be sufficient to pollute the stream."

The opinion of the medical men is that if Ladysmith camp is to be retained, it should be vacated by the troops, during the summer months, and even then it would take £20,000 or £30,000 to make it habitable. I think your Lordships will agree that this is a case which ought to be inquired into.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The Marquess of LANS-
DOWN): My Lords, I am afraid I am not able to give my noble Friend any information as to the length of time during which it is likely that Ladysmith will be occupied as a military station. We regard it as a point of considerable strategical importance, and we are certainly not likely to withdraw from it in the near future. My noble Friend is perfectly correct in saying that the health of the troops at Ladysmith has left much to be desired. I have made inquiries into the matter, but I cannot find that the climate of Ladysmith, taking one part of the year with another, can be described as a bad climate,

Lord Mendip.

though there are undoubtedly seasons of the year when the weather is both hot and damp, and when the most terrible of all scourges, enteric fever, becomes very prevalent among the troops. We have already done something to improve the sanitary conditions. We spent last year on the improvements of the huts a sum of about £8,000. This year we are spending a further sum of about £15,000 upon the accommodation for the troops in Natal, a part of which will be spent at Ladysmith. It may, perhaps, interest my noble Friend to know that altogether we have spent at Ladysmith no less than £55,000. I have received within the last few days a very valuable Report from the General Officer commanding the troops in South Africa on the question to which my noble Friend has referred. He has made a number of very practical and well-considered suggestions as to the steps which might be taken to mitigate these evils. One of these is to put the troops in camp during part of the year upon healthier ground. Such healthier ground does exist on the Mooi River. I believe the site is something like 5,000 feet above the sea, and I think I am right in saying that part of the troops have been moved to that place quite lately, and are probably there now. The general officer also calls attention to the necessity of surface draining, and the desirability of improving the water supply and hospital accommodation. These matters will certainly have the consideration of the War Department. I may say that the general made no mention of the fact that huts were in too close proximity to one another, but that is a point into which I shall be glad to inquire. My noble Friend will remember that Ladysmith was occupied in 1897 at very short notice by the troops, and that of necessity there were not at the place those sanitary appliances which are usual in large permanent camps. I can assure my noble Friend that we shall watch the health of the troops with close attention, and no pains will be spared to mitigate those regrettable conditions upon which he has dwelt.

TROUT FISHING ANNUAL CLOSE TIME
(SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.]

Read third time (according to order),
and passed, and sent to the Commons.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS IN CHURCHES
BILL [H.L.]

Read third time (according to order),
and passed, and sent to the Commons.

The House adjourned at five minutes
after Five of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 4th May 1899.

MR. SPEAKER took the Chair at
Three of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [H.L.] (STANDING
ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED
INTO COMPLIED WITH).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table
Report from one of the Examiners of
Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the
case of the following Bill, originating in
the Lords, and referred on the First
Reading thereof, the Standing Orders
not previously inquired into, and which
are applicable thereto, have been com-
plied with, viz. :—

St. Albans Gas Bill [H.L.].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second
time.

TAFF VALE RAILWAY BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

GATESHEAD AND DISTRICT TRAMWAYS
BILL.

As amended, considered; Amend-
ments made; Bill to be read the third
time.

LONDON, WALTHAMSTOW, AND EPPING
FOREST RAILWAY (NO. 2) BILL.

“To authorise the London, Waltham-
stow, and Epping Forest Railway Com-
pany to construct a new railway to
connect with the Great Eastern Rail-
way; to abandon a portion of their
authorised railway; and for other pur-
poses,” read the first time; and referred
to the Examiners of Petitions for Private
Bills.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP B).

Sir JOHN BRUNNER reported from the
Committee on Group B of Private Bills;
That, for the convenience of parties, they
had adjourned till Monday next, at
Twelve of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F).

MR. HARGREAVES BROWN reported
from the Committee on Group F of
Private Bills; That, to meet the con-
venience of parties, they had adjourned
till Monday next, at Twelve of the
clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

BODIES CORPORATE (JOINT TENANCY)
BILL [H.L.].

Read the first time; to be read a
second time upon Thursday next, and to
be printed. [Bill 172.]

LAND CHARGES BILL [H.L.].

Read the first time; to be read a
second time upon Thursday next, and to
be printed. [Bill 173.]

MILTON CREEK CONSERVANCY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report
to lie upon the Table. and to be printed.

BROUGHTY FERRY GAS AND PAVING
ORDER BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; referred to the
Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills,
and to be printed. (Bill 174.)

SOUTHAMPTON CORPORATION
WATER BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

BURY CORPORATION BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

SKIPTON URBAN DISTRICT GAS BILL
[H.L.]

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm a Provisional Order under The Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892, relating to Broughty Ferry Gas Supply and Paving." Broughty Ferry Gas and Paving Order Bill [H.L.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to enable the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough of Southampton to acquire the portion within the borough of the undertaking of the South Hants Waterworks Company; and for other purposes." Southampton Corporation Water Bill [H.L.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Corporation of Bury to work the tramways in the borough of Bury when acquired by them, and to make further and better provision in relation to the local government of the said borough; and for other purposes. Bury Corporation Bill [H.L.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to empower the urban district council of the urban district of Skipton to supply gas, and to purchase the undertaking of the Skipton Gas Company; and for other purposes." Skipton Urban District Gas Bill [H.L.]

PETITIONS.

BOROUGH FUNDS ACT, 1872.

Petition from Aston Manor, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Halifax, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND RENTS (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Petitions in favour;—From East Ashford;—Malton;—Haworth;—Hanley; Kettering;—Longton;—and, Selby; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO
(SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Kelso;—Meigle;—Govanhill;—Govan;—and, Peterhead; to lie upon the Table.

MERCANTILE MARINE.

Petition of the Shipping Federation of the United Kingdom, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Morley Main;—Lofthouse;—Crigglestone;—Shaw Cross;—Netherton;—Saville Pit;—Rothwell;—Ashton Field;—Llanerch;—Gillhead;—and, Hulton's Deep and Rishton Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.

Petition from Putney, for extension to women; to lie upon the Table.

EATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petition from Durham, against; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON
SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Pontefract (two);—Harpurhey;—Banbury;—Westgate-on-Sea;—and, Great Yarmouth; to lie upon the Table.

SMALL HOUSES (ACQUISITION OF
OWNERSHIP) BILL.

Petition from Durham, against; to lie upon the Table.

TEMPERANCE REFORM (THREEFOLD
OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Hamilton, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

TOWN COUNCILS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Peebles, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) (GENERAL
REPORTS).

Copies presented,—of General Reports by Her Majesty's Chief Inspectors on Schools in the Northern and Western Divisions of Scotland, for the year 1898 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MAILS (AMERICAN SERVICE).

Return presented,—relative thereto [ordered 27th February; Sir John Leng]; to lie upon the Table.

PHARMACY ACTS (IRELAND).

Copy presented,—of Order in Council, dated 1st May 1899, approving of a Regulation made by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented,—of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2240 to 2244 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILL.

IMBECILES (TRAINING INSTITUTIONS);

Bill to exempt from Poor and other Local Rates all Registered Institutions for the care, training, and education of Idiots and Imbeciles, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Round, Mr. Tomlinson, Sir John Maclure, Sir Frederick Mappin, Mr. Allison, Sir William Houldsworth, and Colonel Lockwood.

Presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Friday 2nd June, and to be printed. [Bill 175.]

QUESTIONS.

UNQUALIFIED DISPENSERS.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the attention of the Privy Council has been drawn to the evidence and verdict given at an inquest held at Heaton Norris on 9th January 1899, from which it appears that a mistake by a doctor's unqualified dispenser resulted in the patient's death; and whether, seeing that, notwithstanding that the Pharmacy Act enacts that sellers of poison must possess a qualification, it is not illegal for doctors to employ any class of unqualified persons to dispense medicines, however dangerous or poisonous, the Government will take steps to ensure that medicines containing poisons shall only be dispensed by those holding either medical or pharmaceutical qualification?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (Sir J. GORST, Cambridge University): The answer to the first paragraph of the Question is in the affirmative, and the Privy Council have been in communication with the General Medical Council on the subject. The Executive Committee of that body, while admitting that occasional accidents may arise from the employment by qualified medical practitioners of careless or incompetent dispensers, consider such cases to be very rare, and believe the best protection

afforded to the public to be the responsibility of the practitioners for the acts or defaults of the servant whom he employs. Instances of such mistakes are not confined to dispensers employed by medical practitioners.

COLONIAL WINES.

SIR H. VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if, having given careful consideration, according to promise, to all the circumstances advanced in favour of the relief of colonial wine from the new duty, he is now in a position to announce the decision of Her Majesty's Government upon the question?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I thought I had already made it clear that we did not feel able to entertain the proposal to exempt colonial wines from the new duty.

SIR H. VINCENT said he would call attention to the matter in Committee.

FRESWICK PIER.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that great dissatisfaction exists amongst the fishermen of Freswick, Caithness, in consequence of the pier which has been erected there, under the Highlands and Islands Works Act, being practically of no use owing to the shallowness of the basin; will he explain why the plans and specifications that were sanctioned by the Board of Trade have not been carried out; and at whose instance were the modifications made?

MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrews Burghs) (for the LORD ADVOCATE): I am not aware that there is great local dissatisfaction at Freswick owing to the shallowness of the basin, but it is true that during the severe storms of winter a quantity of stones have been washed into it. This may be expected to occur frequently, and it will devolve on the County Council to have them removed. The plans and specifications sanctioned by the Board of Trade have been carried out with the single modification that at the request of the fishermen and with the approval of the consulting engineer a stair was substituted for a ladder.

THE FRENCH NAVY.

MR. NICOL (Argyll): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the French Government propose, in order to provide a school for the education of seamen for their navy, to give a bounty or *compensation d'armement* to all ships built or owned in France; and, if so, what it would amount to on a vessel of 4,000 tons in commission for a year; whether it is proposed, in order to promote the building and owning in France of merchant ships, to materially increase the existing bounty system; and, if so, what is the amount proposed to be given to a new steamer of 4,000 tons gross register running 6,000 miles in a year; and what are the terms of the present bounties given to vessels built and owned in France?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. ST. JOHN BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): We have received no official information to the effect of the first two paragraphs of the Question, but a Report from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris will be called for. Full particulars (which are too long to be given within the limits of a reply to a Question) as to the terms of the present French bounties on shipping will be found at page 19 of the Reports already laid before Parliament (Commercial, No. 2, 1898).

SUSPENSION OF A SHIPMASTER'S CERTIFICATE.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has suspended for three months the master's certificate of Mr. E. R. Beveridge, master of the ship "J. V. Troop," on the ground that Mr. Beveridge was fined £5 by the Liverpool city justices for an assault upon a seaman; whether the Board of Trade habitually exercises the power given to it by Section 469 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, by sitting as a court of review upon every case decided by a court of law in which any master, mate, or engineer has been convicted of any offence; whether, in considering any conviction for any offence committed by a master, mate, or engineer, the Board of Trade takes into

account, or attaches any importance to, the question whether the offence was such as to show professional incompetency or inadequacy in the capacity of master, mate, or engineer; on what grounds the Board added to this penalty the far more serious punishment of a suspension of Captain Beveridge's certificate and a consequent deprivation of his means of livelihood for three months, and thereby punished him a second time for the same offence; whether he or any member of the Board was present at the proceedings at Liverpool; and, if not, upon what report of those proceedings he acted; whether he called upon Captain Beveridge for any explanation or defence before imposing upon him this additional punishment, and whether Captain Beveridge was in any way heard in his own defence by the Board of Trade before that second penalty was imposed; whether the proceedings of the Board of Trade, in considering this matter and the infliction of this punishment, were in any sense public or altogether private; and whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the report of the proceedings of the court and any other documents which were considered by the Board of Trade before arriving at the conclusion to suspend Mr. Beveridge's certificate?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): In pursuance of their powers, the Board of Trade have suspended the certificate of Mr. E. R. Beveridge, of the ship "J. V. Troop," for three months, upon his conviction at Liverpool for a brutal assault upon a member of his crew. When an officer is convicted of such an offence, it is a rule of the Department to deal with his certificate. The Department did not review the decision of the court or the evidence upon conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction. In a case which seriously affected the defendant's character as a shipmaster, the Board of Trade were bound to take action.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Am I to understand that, without hearing the captain in his own defence, the right honourable Gentleman has suspended him on an *ex parte* statement?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Yes.

THE IMPERIAL PENNY POSTAGE.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that since the cheap rate of postage to India heavy additional work has fallen upon the sorters of the Sea Post Office between Bombay and Aden; whether in March last the number of bags in a single mail exceeded 1,000, whereas five years ago the average was barely half that number; whether the sorters have usually to work from 6.30 a.m. to 11 p.m.; and whether he will cause such reasonable additions to be made to the staff as will prevent excessive pressure and unduly long hours of work in a tropical climate?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Faling): I have received as yet no information as to the amount of additional work thrown upon the sorters of the Sea Post Office by the recent reduction in the rate of postage, but I will communicate with the Government of India on the subject.

INDIAN RAILWAYS.

MR. H. ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will state how much of the Rx.9,850,500, entered in the Revised Estimate of the Indian Budget as capital expenditure on Railways and Irrigation Works during the year 1898-9, was taken from cash balances, and how much from loans; whether he will also state how much of the Rx.10,433,600 of capital expenditure proposed to be spent in 1899-1900 for similar public works will be raised from loans, and how much from current revenues; and what sum of this large capital outlay will be allocated for water storage and irrigation purposes?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: The estimates show, as regards railways, a reduction of the deficiency from Rx.2,660,000 in 1896-97 and Rx.1,432,000 in 1897-98 to Rx.878,100 in 1898-99 and Rx.880,600 in 1899-1900. The honourable Member is, of course, aware that the variations in the deficiency are mainly dependent

on the rate of exchange at which the payments in England are made. In India the profit on the working of the railways was 5.20 per cent. in 1896, 5.08 in 1897 (when the famine and plague affected the returns), and 5.30 in 1898. In respect of irrigation the estimates show a profit of Rs.239,600 in 1898-99 and of Rs.116,300 in 1899-1900.

THE COLONIES AND THE WINE DUTIES.

SIR H. VINCENT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he has received any communication from the High Commissioner for Canada and the Agents-General of the other nine self-governing Colonies, urging the exemption of Colonial wine from the operation of the new duties, on account of the injury it is feared they will do to a comparatively young industry, and calling attention to the disadvantage under which it already labours compared to the foreigner, owing to distance, freight, and having to import the casks from England; and if he will lay any such communication upon the Table for the information of Members before the Finance Bill comes into Committee?

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. I will lay the letter from the Agents-General upon the Table.

SIR H. VINCENT: I beg to ask whether a cablegram has been received by Her Majesty's Government from the Prime Ministers of the seven Governments of Australasia deprecating that a course is to be taken by this country at variance with the better dispositions now prevailing in favour of making differences in respect of British goods; and whether New Zealand, Tasmania, and Western Australia have actually in preparation Bills in this sense?

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: A telegram to the effect stated in the Question has been received from the Prime Minister of New South Wales on behalf of the Prime Ministers of the Australasian Colonies. I am not aware that such Bills are actually in preparation in these Colonies.

INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE.

MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether it is possible to grant to the members of the Indian Civil Service the same advantages with regard to passage money which are allowed to police and forest officers?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: The two cases which are contrasted in my right honourable Friend's Question do not stand on the same footing. The Indian civilian has advantages both before he leaves for India, and after his arrival there, which the police and forest officers do not enjoy. But on the other hand it has never been the practice to pay for his passage to India, and I see no sufficient reason, as at present advised, for making any change in this respect.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE.

MR. TALBOT: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education when the Returns relating to the excessive employment of children of school age will be in the hands of Members?

SIR J. GORST: The Return will be immediately presented to the House, but I am told that it will take about a month to print.

SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the restriction on Sunday labour in foreign countries with respect to the publication of Sunday newspapers; whether he is aware that in Germany the law is very strict in providing that a newspaper may be printed during the night from Saturday to Sunday, but that the distributors must have finished their work by eight or nine o'clock in the morning; and that no newspaper can be bought in Berlin after 10 o'clock on Sunday morning; while no newspaper is allowed to work its staff on Sundays with the exception of two, which have a special arrangement with

the police, who see that none of the staff work seven days a week; whether he is aware that in Vienna no daily newspaper appears on Monday morning, which, combined with the fact that the Sunday edition is almost entirely produced on Saturday, secures for every newspaper worker a holiday on Sunday; and whether the Government see their way to provide, by some analogous arrangement, for the suppression of Sunday labour in this country in connection with newspaper work?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir M. W. RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): I have seen certain information recently published in one of the newspapers on the subject referred to in the Question. With respect to my own sympathies and the action of the Government I have nothing to add to what I recently stated in the House. I cannot, however, undertake to propose legislation in the direction indicated.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCOTLAND.

DR. CLARK: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate why the returns of the allocation of the contributions to Scotland, under the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889, the Local Taxation Act, 1890, and the Education and Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1892, for the years ending 31st March 1897 and 1898 are not published; what was the amount paid under sub-section (6) of section 2 of the Act of 1892; and what was the sum paid to (1) school boards and (2) voluntary schools during the year ending 31st March 1898?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: As regards the first part of the honourable Member's Question, the returns therein referred to have, as hitherto laid before Parliament, included columns showing how the local authorities applied the amounts received by them respectively out of the Local Taxation (Scotland) Account. Considerable difficulty and consequent delay have occurred in the collection of these particulars. After consideration of the matter, the Secretary for Scotland proposes to cause a Return to be laid before Parliament for the two years specified

by the honourable Member without these particulars, but showing in summary the payments into and out of the Local Taxation (Scotland) Account. This can be done within the next fortnight, leaving the Return of the application of the money by the local authorities to be subsequently issued. As regards the second portion of the Question, there was no residue available for payment to the Scotch Education Department under section 2 (b) of the 1892 Act for the year 1896-7, but in 1897-8 there was a residue of £16,202 0s. 11d. which was duly paid over. As regards the third part of the Question, the statistical tables of the Department showing the grants paid to different classes of schools, are drawn up for each year ending 30th September, not for that ending 31st March. The following is the statement of grants paid to school boards and Voluntary schools respectively during the year ended 31st March 1898: School board, £984,049 4s. 9d.; Voluntary schools, £157,922 8s. 9d.

"SAVAGE SOUTH AFRICA."

SIR R. REID (Dumfries Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that, notwithstanding the protests of the four Governments of the Cape, Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal, and the disapproval of Sir Alfred Milner, endorsed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, some Natives of South Africa have been brought over for exhibition at the show called "Savage South Africa"; and whether the Secretary of State for the Colonies can do anything to prevent the continuance of this part of the exhibition?

MR. T. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield) also had the following Question on the Paper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the fact that 50 Zulu men have been brought to London from South Africa to be exhibited at a show called "Savage South Africa"; that these men had been led to believe that they were to be employed at the Kimberley Mines in Cape Colony, and that passes had been given to them to travel to those mines; and that a number of

Native women have been obtained for the same show by means of advertisements which appeared in the British South African newspapers, stating that various wild horned animals, and also young Afrikaner girls (good looking, and to be slightly coloured), were wanted for the exhibition; whether the Governments of all the British Colonies and Dutch States in South Africa protested against the exportation of these Natives on the grounds of morality and of the interests both of the Natives themselves and their good government by these Colonies and States; whether he is aware that certain directors or officials of the Chartered Company have aided in the exportation of these Natives under the above circumstances; whether, seeing that this exhibition is to be opened on Monday next under illustrious patronage, the above facts have been brought to the notice of the personage concerned; and whether the Government will now take any steps to procure the return of these Natives to their own country?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): My attention has been called to the fact that 50 Zulus have been brought to London from South Africa to be exhibited at a show called "Savage South Africa." I understand that passes were given to them to travel to the Kimberley Mines, but I am not informed whether they were led to believe that they were to be employed in the mines. I do not know whether Native women have also been brought over for the same show. The Government of the British Colonies and the Dutch Republics in South Africa objected to the exportation of Natives for the above purpose on the ground stated. A director of the British South Africa Company is understood to have taken part in promoting the scheme before the opposition of the High Commissioner was known. The Administrator at Bulawayo, on being informed of the objection of the High Commissioner, refused to sanction the proposal to convey Matabels to England. Her Majesty's Government have no power to compel the return of the Natives to South Africa.

I can only express my regret and disapproval of their introduction. I had not observed that the show was to be opened by the Duke of Cambridge, but I now propose to communicate with his Royal Highness immediately on the subject.

THE LAW OF CONSTRUCTIVE MURDER.

SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is prepared to bring in during the present Session a short Bill to amend the existing Law of Constructive Murder, or to support a Bill, the terms of which should be satisfactory to the Home Office, having the same object in view?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: I am of opinion that the law of constructive murder does require amendment; but it is a very difficult subject to deal with, and I cannot hold out any hope that the Government will be able this Session to introduce a Bill or otherwise to afford adequate facilities for the treatment of this important question. I may add that I understand that the opinion of Her Majesty's Judges on the existing state of the law has been specially invited.

INDIA AND TURKESTAN.

MR. DRAGE (Derby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether reports have been received by the Indian Government from the British Agent at Ladak and Yarkand with regard to the rapid decrease of the trade of British India with Russian Turkestan; whether those reports state that the trade is likely still further to decrease owing to the extension of the Russian railway to Andijan; and whether any suggestions are made in these reports which the Government can adopt for the development of the trade of India with China, through Tibet, to make up for the loss thus sustained?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: The Ladak trade returns for the latest year show a decrease in the trade of India with Chinese Turkestan.

which the Assistant Resident in Ladak attributes to the duty levied in India upon hemp exported from Yarkand. The Resident in Kashmir thinks it possible that improved communications with Russian centres may cause further decline in the Indo-Yarkand trade. The Government of India has been considering measures for improving trade between India and Tibet *via* Sikkim, and the Viceroy is in communication with the Imperial Commissioner of Tibetan affairs on the subject.

HURST STREET (CARLISLE) BOARD SCHOOL.

Mr. ALLISON (Cumberland, Eskdale): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education why, in reference to the want of accommodation at Hurst Street Board School, Carlisle, the Education Department having called upon the Board in 1896, and again in February 1898, to supply further accommodation by erecting new schools, and having licensed a room in Edward Street as temporary accommodation until such schools were erected, now proposes to withdraw the licence for the temporary room without calling upon the Board to supply the further accommodation required in 1896 and 1898?

SIR JOHN GORST: The reference appears to be to the Brook Street Board School. The Education Department suggested, rather than required, the supply of further accommodation. The School Board is now considering, after reference to the Department, whether any, and what, deficiency exists.

FIXING FAIR RENTS IN IRELAND.

Mr. MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that by the recent rules issued by the Irish Land Commission under the provisions of The Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, it is prescribed that, on lodging the notice to fix a fair rent, such application shall be accompanied by an extract from the Valuation Books showing for the year referred to in The Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, as the standard financial year the valua-

tion of the agricultural lands and the hereditaments comprised in the holding, such extract to be certified by the proper officer of the Valuation Office, Dublin; whether he is aware that Mr. Ralph Hall Reid, solicitor, in answer to an application on behalf of clients for such certificates made on 24th April, received on 26th April from the chief clerk of the General Valuation Office, Dublin, a lithographed form with the signature of the chief clerk in lithograph, stating that in consequence of the great number of applications for standard year-certificates, it would not be possible to supply those asked for till "about ten days or a fortnight from the present time"; and whether, having regard to the fact that this delay on the part of the officials of a Government Office will postpone the service of the notices to fix a fair rent till after the 1st May, and consequently deprive tenants of a fair rent for a further period of half a year, any steps will be taken to place the tenants who, through default in the machinery of the Valuation Office, have not obtained the standard year certificate, in as good a position as if they had obtained such certificate on the day of their application for the same, and had lodged the notice to fix a fair rent on that day?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. G. W. BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): The rule referred to in the first paragraph was issued on the 23rd March last, and relates to originating notices to fix fair rents lodged after the appointed day. Owing to the pressure of work on the staff of the Valuation Office it was not found possible to comply in every case before the 1st May with the numerous applications received for certificates of valuation for the standard year. With a view, however, to prevent any hardship arising in such cases, the Land Commissioners have already directed that applications to fix fair rents should, for the present, be received though unaccompanied by the certificates of valuation, and that, provided the certificates are furnished within a reasonable time, and no errors or discrepancies are found to exist between the certificate and the particulars in the originating notice which the parties are unable to remove, the case should be listed in due course.

ASHLEY GREEN.

MR. E. GRIFFITH (Anglesey): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, with reference to the Order made on 13th February 1897, dividing the parish of Chesham so as to constitute the ecclesiastical parish of St. John, Ashley Green, a separate parish for all civil and secular purposes, by which it was provided that the School Board of Chesham should cease to have jurisdiction within the area of the new parish of Ashley Green, whether he gave notice to the Chesham School Board before making this alteration; (1) whether he is aware that the School Board had raised six different loans upon security of the rates of the whole parish before it was divided; (2) whether in dividing the parish he made any arrangement for adjusting the then existing debts and liabilities of the undivided parish, and in what form, and by whom, and on what basis that adjustment is to be made; (3) and who is liable for the portion of the old debts of the Chesham School Board which is secured upon the rates of the new parish of Ashley Green, and how that liability is to be enforced?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): In reply to the first paragraph, the parish of Chesham was divided into Chesham and Ashley Green by order of the Bucks County Council. That order in itself took Ashley Green out of the Chesham school district. We have no power, in the *absence of petition*, to prevent such an order taking effect, although we may modify the order so as—in the words of the Act—to give effect to its objects. No petition was presented, and it was incumbent on the Local Government Board to make the confirming order accordingly. In this case the Education Department suggested that for educational purposes the two parishes should be a united district, but both the county council and Ashley Green represented to us that this was neither the purport nor the intention of the county council order, and we were requested to make this quite clear in the confirming order—which we did. We had no authority to do anything else. We were in communication with, and gave notice to, the Education Department, but not directly

to the school board. The reply to the second paragraph is in the affirmative. In reply to the third paragraph, no request was made for the adjustment of liabilities in the confirming order, and no provision for adjustment was made. I have no authority to determine the point which is raised in the last paragraph, but I presume that the Chesham School Board is liable for all the debts it has incurred.

WYMINGTON (BEDFORDSHIRE), PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will supply a copy of the last annual Report of the inspector, the schedules of grants, and the annual cash statement of the public elementary school at Wympington, Bedfordshire; and whether, in view of the frequent inconvenience caused by the time for the inspection of voluntary school accounts being now limited to six months in the year, he will so amend Article 89 of the Code as to restore the right of 12 months inspection, which was the law when he took office?

SIR J. GORST: I shall be happy to supply the honourable Gentleman with the particulars referred to, but the Committee of Council are of opinion that the period fixed in Article 89 of the Code is sufficient in ordinary cases, and they are not aware that frequent inconvenience has been caused by the alteration made in 1894.

WITWATERSRAND.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether a humble petition of British subjects resident in the Witwatersrand to Her Majesty has been received and presented; and whether any and what answer has been made thereto?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: The petition has been received, and is under consideration.

TICKHILL NATIONAL SCHOOLS, YORKSHIRE.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that the Master of the National Schools at Tickhill, Yorkshire, personally receives fees from a number of the children in the schools; and whether this is a breach of Article 81 of the Code, which says "a school must not be conducted for private profit?"

SIR J. GORST: I understand that the master receives boarders in his house, and that these boarders attend the school. The master receives a fixed salary for his services; no fee is charged in the school; and there has been, so far as the Department is aware, no breach of Article 81 of the Code.

STAFF AT THE CENTRAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

MR. M'GHEE (Louth, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether he can state the number of telegraphists short of the staff authorised for working the Central Telegraph Office between 11 a.m. and noon on the 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 18th, and 19th of April; and whether it is a fact that the dinner time of a large number of the workers was considerably delayed owing to the insufficiency of the staff?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY: The number of telegraphists short of the authorised staff allowance between 11 a.m. and noon on the dates mentioned ranged from 32 to 64; and averages 41 out of a total of 2,000. A large number of telegraphists were withdrawn from the Central Office for special duties at race meetings, etc., and the full number usually allowed between 11 a.m. and noon could not have been provided without bringing on at 11 o'clock telegraphists whose ordinary attendance did not commence until 3 p.m., and thus involving four hours' overtime in each case to meet the requirements of a single hour. Notwithstanding the shortness of staff, however, the whole of the telegraphists whose duty commenced at 7 a.m. were relieved for refreshment between 11 a.m. and noon, excepting on one day when a

few telegraphists were detained until a few minutes after noon. The staff commencing duty at 8 a.m. were released between 12.15 and 12.50 p.m., with the exception that on one day a few telegraphists were detained until 1.15 p.m. The staff commencing duty at 9 a.m. were in every case released before 2 p.m.

TELEGRAPH LEARNERS.

MR. M'GHEE: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether a number of telegraph learners attending the School of Telegraphy, Moorgate Street Buildings, have passed the usual course of instruction, and have been informed that no vacancies exist in the Central Telegraph Office; whether they receive no pay whilst at the school, but should receive 12s. per week on entering the Telegraph Office; and whether, as overtime is being performed at the Central Telegraph Office, the learners can be given appointments?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY: Eleven Central Telegraph Office learners and twenty London Postal Service learners have passed the usual course of instruction at the School of Telegraphy, and have been waiting for vacancies. They receive no pay for their attendance at the school, but the Central Telegraph Office learners are employed part time at the Central Telegraph Office to reduce the payment for overtime, and for this they receive 6s. a week. Six of the eleven Central Telegraph Office learners will be appointed during the present week, when their wages will be 12s. a week, and the remaining five, who only qualified in March last, will no doubt be shortly provided for.

THE CONVERTED BATTERIES.

MAJOR RASCH: I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether the issue of converted batteries began early in March 1899; and what was the number of converted batteries in the hands of the troops on 21st April 1899?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): The first converted gun-carriages were issued on 7th March 1899. The number of batteries equipped with these converted carriages on 21st April was 14. A regular issue is now proceeding according to a programme that has been laid down.

VACCINATION.

SIR W. PRIESTLEY (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether it is true that in Ipswich and other localities, where previously there had been great opposition to vaccination, the cases of vaccination have notably increased since the passing of the Act of last year, and that many parents who had been persuaded to apply for certificates of exemption have not presented them to the vaccinating officer, but have subsequently had their children vaccinated?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): There is distinct evidence from reports that have been submitted to me that in a number of localities where previously there had been a great amount of default under the Vaccination Acts the number of vaccinations performed since the new Vaccination Act came into operation on January 1st last has been in excess of that for any corresponding period in recent years. The case of Ipswich, to which my honourable Friend refers, is one in point. There the average quarterly number of vaccinations performed by the Public Vaccinator during 1897 and 1898 was only 33, whereas in the first quarter of the present year the number vaccinated was 198. It is also true that in certain cases parents, who on the passing of the Act of 1898 obtained certificates of exemption on the ground that they conscientiously believed that vaccination would be prejudicial to the health of their children, have, entirely of their own initiative, procured the vaccination of those children.

ALDERSHOT CAMP FARM.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, N.): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether any, and, if so, what sale of milk now takes place from the Camp Sewage Farm at Aldershot; whether a committee of independent medical men has inspected the farm and the dairy; and whether their Report will be communicated to the House.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: Milk from the Camp Farm Dairy is supplied, if desired, to the canteens at Aldershot, and also to officers and married non-commissioned officers and men. The farm was inspected on Thursday last by Dr. Andrewes, who is sanitary officer and pathologist to the medical school of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and who was selected for the duty at the recommendation of the medical officer of the Local Government Board. His Report has not yet been received, but it is understood that he has formed a very favourable opinion of the sanitary state of the dairy and farm. The Report will be laid upon the Table without unnecessary delay.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Can the right honourable Gentleman say whether Dr. Andrewes drank any of the milk himself?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: I am not informed as to that, but I may say that Dr. Andrewes purchased some of the butter for consumption in his own family.

INDIAN RAILWAY SYSTEM DEFICIENCY.

MR. H. ROBERTS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will state what has been the net deficiency on the working of the Indian railway system during the year just closed, and what is the estimated financial result of the operations of Indian railways for the current year; and, similarly, what is the profit, if any, under the head of irrigation during the year just closed, and what is the estimated profit from the same source for the current year, including the gain accruing to the land revenue from irrigated areas?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: The estimates show, as regards railways, a reduction of the deficiency from Rs. 2,660,000 in 1896-97 and Rs. 1,432,600 in 1897-98, to Rs. 878,100 in 1898-99 and Rs. 880,600 in 1899-1900. The honourable Member is, of course, aware that the variations in the deficiency are mainly dependent on the rate of exchange at which the payments in England are made. In India the profit on the working of the railways was 5.20 per cent. in 1896, 5.08 per cent. in 1897 (when the famine and plague affected the returns), and 5.30 per cent. in 1898. In respect of irrigation, the estimates show a profit of Rs. 239,600 in 1898-99, and of Rs. 116,500 in 1899-1900.

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Mr. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury is he aware that the proof sheets of the Debates for the 20th April did not reach the Members who took part in them until the 29th April; whether he is aware that every Member of the Canadian Parliament receives in the morning with his Parliamentary Papers an official unrevised report of the proceedings of the previous day; and whether there is any reason why Members of the Imperial Parliament should not have the same privilege?

Mr. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrews Burghs) (who replied on behalf of Mr. Hanbury): The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. The delay was due to alterations having to be made in the contractor's machinery rooms as required by the local authority. The answer to the second paragraph is in the negative. It would not be possible under the existing contract to require proofs to be delivered as suggested in the Question, and the large additional expense would in any case hardly be justified by any compensating advantage. The conditions of the Canadian Parliament vary considerably from those of the Imperial Parliament.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): May I ask whether the honourable Gentleman is not aware that the practice referred to is adopted in the case of Private Bills?

Mr. ANSTRUTHER: Yes, Sir; but probably at very considerable expense.

Mr. LEWIS: May I ask in what respects the conditions of the Canadian Parliament differ from those of our own?

[No Reply.]

THE MAINTENANCE OF THE BROTHERS NATU.

Sir W. WEDDERBURN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India will he state what is the amount of the expenses incurred on account of the maintenance of the brothers Natu since their arrest; whether any portion of these expenses are charged to the Natu estate; and, if so, under what provision of law such a charge is made?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA: According to the accounts as yet received, the payments made up to the 31st of July 1898 out of their estate for the maintenance of the two brothers amounted to Rs. 1,912 0 anna 4 pies. I have not received accounts of the total cost of their maintenance up to that date, nor of the expenditure from their estates after that date. The charge made against their estates under management was incurred under Section 2 Regulation XXV. of 1827, and in accordance with the advice of the legal officers of Bombay.

PRESERVATIVES IN FOOD.

Mr. A. MOORE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether it is his intention to appoint a Committee to deal with preservatives in food?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincoln, Sleaford) (for the President of the Board of Agriculture): It is intended to appoint a Committee to inquire into the use of preservatives in food, and the Committee is now in course of formation.

Mr. MOORE: Will the right honourable Gentleman say whether the Committee will be a Departmental one or a Committee of the House of Commons?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD: Departmental.

MR. CHANNING: Will the Committee report before the report stage of the Sale of Food and Drugs Bill?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD: No, Sir; the inquiry must occupy some time.

VACCINATION.

MR. COGHILL (Stoke-upon-Trent): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will bring in a Bill to enable magistrates who have a conscientious objection to grant certificates of exemption from vaccination under section 2 of the Vaccination Act 1898 to decline to grant these certificates of conscientious objection?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: No, Sir.

MR. COGHILL: May I ask the right honourable Gentleman if a magistrate is not entitled to have a conscience as much as anybody else?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I must say that it is extremely doubtful whether the Question on the Paper does not amount to a breach of the rules, but Questions which have merely a satirical object ought not to be put.

MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention had been called to the fact that, during the present small-pox epidemic in Hull, of 25 cases admitted to the hospital (of whom three died) all the cases were of unvaccinated patients; and if the proportion of unvaccinated persons was large in the Hull district?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD: According to the latest information I have received, it is not the fact that during the present small-pox epidemic in Hull all the cases admitted to the hospital—which were 26, and not 25—were unvaccinated. Nineteen had been vaccinated, and the medical officer of health reports these cases to be of a modified character, and that none had died. The remaining seven were unvaccinated; of these, four

had died. I have no means of estimating the proportion of unvaccinated persons of all ages in Hull, but during the last five years for which Returns have been received, some 20 per cent. of the children whose births were registered in the two unions in which Hull is comprised, and who survived when the Returns were made, were then unvaccinated.

MR. COGHILL: May I ask, Sir, whether, in view of the fact that more than 200,000 certificates of exemption have been granted, it is not a matter of surprise that there has not been an epidemic of small-pox?

[No reply.]

SUMMARIES OF MINES STATISTICS.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the summaries of statistics relating to mines will be issued to Members; whether such summaries were, until recent years, issued at a much earlier period of the Session; and whether he is aware that they lose much of their value by the delay in their publication?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT: The statistics referred to are now available to Members, having been delivered at the Vote Office yesterday. This is an earlier date than in any year since the returns from quarries as well as from mines have been given. Moreover, the Home Office this year issued an advanced proof of the statistics, so far as they relate to mines, which was in the hands of the honourable Member more than a month ago.

THE REGISTRAR OF FRIENDLY SOCIETIES AND THE COMPENSATION ACT.

MR. D. A. THOMAS: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury when the Report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies, in respect to schemes sanctioned by him under the Compensation Act, laid upon the Table of the House on March 1st, will be issued to Members?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY: It would not be possible to state precisely when their Report will appear, but it will probably be published at an earlier date than last year's Report.

COLLECTION OF LAND TAX.

MR. BILL (Staffordshire, Leek): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that Land Tax has been improperly collected in Staffordshire from many persons, chiefly small landowners, whose incomes entitle them to total exemption, and whether he will issue general instructions to collectors to forbid their claiming land tax from persons on whom no demand for income tax has been made, and who are therefore presumably entitled to relief?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Instructions have from the first been issued with a view to avoiding as far as possible unnecessary applications for the payment of land tax assessed upon properties the owners of which, having been allowed exemption or abatement of income tax, are known to be entitled to relief under the 12th section of the Finance Act, 1898. There are, no doubt, cases in which the information possessed by the surveyors of taxes is not sufficient to enable the charges to be remitted without application from the owners of the properties. In such cases it must be left to the persons who consider themselves to be entitled to relief to prefer their claims in the manner prescribed by the Act. I have no reason to suppose that the circumstances in Staffordshire differ from those in other parts of the country.

THE CASE OF MR. LE MESURIER; AND CROWN LAND IN CEYLON.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has received the Report of the Governor of Ceylon on Mr. C. J. R. Le Mesurier's indictment of the Governor and of other officials in Ceylon: whether these complaints were sent to the Colonial Secretary in January through the Governor himself; and

whether it is imperative on the Governor, under the Government regulations, to report on such a complaint at the time of forwarding it to the Secretary of State; and whether the Inspector-General of Police in Ceylon has protested against the use of police to eject the occupants of lands claimed by the Crown; and whether the law officers of the Crown in Ceylon have advised against the action of the Governor in using force to occupy such lands, and advised him to proceed under the Common Law; and has the Government at last taken proceedings under the Common Law of the Island to assert the right of the Crown to use of these lands; and why the same procedure could not have been taken with all the other lands in dispute?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES: Yes. The petition in question, dated the 31st December, was forwarded with a dispatch dated 3rd April, which reached me 24th April. The acting Governor, who wrote the dispatch, explained the delay as follows:—

"It has not been possible to deal with this memorial as speedily as I should have desired, owing to the number of references which were necessitated to the several officers who are charged by Mr. Le Mesurier with grave dereliction of duty. They, in fact, include all those officers of Government whose duties necessitated their coming in contact officially with Mr. Le Mesurier, and his complaints range over a period of some 3½ years."

The Governor, who is in England, states that, as far as he is aware, the Inspector-General of Police did not and was most unlikely to make any such protest as the Question implies; the Attorney-General of Ceylon, under whose advice all proceedings under the Ordinance have been taken, has not advised as suggested in the honourable Member's Question, nor has he advised the Governor to proceed under the ordinary law, except in one or two cases where Mr. Le Mesurier is concerned. In these cases Mr. Le Mesurier, by technical objections, thwarted the proceedings under the Waste Lands Ordinance, and, consequently, the Attorney-General saw no reason why he should continue to have the benefit of the cheap procedure provided by the Ordinance, especially as he would not have the same opportunities

for obstruction under the ordinary law. To adopt the same procedure in all cases would be unfair to other claimants, who prefer the inexpensive and expeditious procedure under the Waste Lands Ordinance. That Ordinance is, generally, very popular, and many large proprietors are anxious to have settlements effected under it because, besides being cheap and expeditious, it provides for the amicable settlement of claims, and Government has, from the first, directed that all bona fide claims are to be treated in a generous spirit. Consequently, nearly all claims other than Mr. Le Mesurier's have been amicably disposed of under the Ordinance without the intervention of the ordinary courts, which are open to every claimant.

AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA.

MR. J. WALTON (York, W.R., Barnsley): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether along with the text of the Agreement with Russia the correspondence relating to the Niu-Chwang Extension Loan will also be laid upon the Table?

MR. BRODRICK: These papers are being prepared, and will be laid on the Table without any avoidable delay.

BOLIVIA.

MR. BOLITHO (Cornwall, St. Ives): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, having regard to British interests in Bolivia, and the fact that Germany, France, Italy, and Spain are represented by Consuls in that country, the question of appointing an English Consul will be considered?

MR. BRODRICK: Such British interests as exist in Bolivia have been during the recent disturbances placed under the protection of the United States Minister. Should the circumstances warrant it, the establishment of a permanent Consular officer will be considered?

THE TRANSVAAL.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that the South African Republic is an independent State, save only the right of Great Britain to veto any treaty negotiated between the Republic and a Foreign Power, the Prime Minister will direct that diplomatic communications with President Kruger shall be carried on henceforth through the Foreign Office?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The answer to this Question is in the negative.

VACCINATION AND SMALLPOX.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the fact that, during the present smallpox epidemic in Hull, out of 25 cases admitted to the hospital (of whom three died) all the cases were of unvaccinated patients; and if the proportion of unvaccinated persons is large in the Hull district, and to what extent the Conscience Clause in the Vaccination Act of last Session has been claimed in that locality?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD: According to the latest information which I have received, it is not the fact that during the present smallpox epidemic in Hull all the cases admitted to the hospital—which were 26 and not 25—were unvaccinated. Nineteen had been vaccinated, and the Medical Officer of Health reports these cases to be of a modified character, and that none had died. The remaining seven were unvaccinated; of these four have died. I have no means of estimating the proportion of unvaccinated persons of all ages in Hull, but during the last 5 years for which returns have been received some 20 per cent. of the children, whose births were registered in the two Unions in which Hull is comprised, and who survived when the returns were made, were then unvaccinated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith), CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS in the Chair.]

(In the Committee.)

CLAUSE 2.

Amendment again proposed—

"In page 1, line 30, to leave out from the word 'ward,' to the word 'regard,' in page 2, line 1."—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton.*)

MR. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) ventured to express the hope that the right honourable Gentleman in charge of the Bill would see his way to accept the present Amendment. In reviewing the history of the system of election of local governing bodies, he called attention to the fact that, whereas in London, under the provisions of the Act of 1894, it was open to every board of guardians to elect one-third of its members every year, or to have the election of the whole board every three years, all the boards of guardians in London had adopted the triennial method. He thought that fact should disabuse the mind of any Gentleman in the House who might think this was in any sense a Party question, because both Liberals and Conservatives were agreed as to the desirability of adopting this system of election. He appealed to Members on both sides of the House who were personally identified with the local government of London as to whether the multiplicity of elections in London was not a really serious evil. They had already three great triennial elections in London—those were for the County Council, the Boards of Guardians, and the School Board. It would, however, be an advantage to have those elections in different years. In 1900 there would be the next School Board election; in 1901 the next election of the London County Council; and if they could arrange that the second election for the new bodies came in

1902 they would have the great municipal elections of London placed in different years. He thought that would give rise to a greater amount of interest in local matters, and to the advantage of all concerned. The extension and multiplicity of elections was a serious item, but he did not advocate triennial elections merely from the point of view of cost. Everyone connected with local government in London was impressed with the disadvantage of too many elections. The boards of guardians, which represented every shade of political opinion and voluntarily adopted triennial elections, were well satisfied with the results, and he trusted that that system would be adopted in the present Bill.

MR. W. F. D. SMITH (Strand) said he thought the arguments on both sides were very evenly balanced. He admitted, however, that there were strong arguments in favour of annual elections, but there was one that had not been mentioned. For instance, if in a particular borough a policy was being pursued which was very much to the distaste of the majority of the electors, the composition of the council could, at the end of the year, be changed to such an extent as either to modify or reverse that policy. So little interest had been shown in the annual elections in London that this, in itself, was a strong argument for making the elections triennial. He ventured to suggest that the views of both sides of the question might be met if, at a later stage of the proceedings, the Government provided for triennial elections in London should two-thirds of the borough councils petition the Local Government Board for them.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) said the right honourable Gentleman in charge of the Bill must see that there was a very strong feeling on both sides of the House in favour of the Amendment. For his part he did not attach too much importance to the fact that all the guardians, or at any rate an enormous majority of them, had adopted the system of triennial election. He based his arguments in support of

the Amendment on very different grounds. In the first place, the lameness of vestrydom in London had been the lack of popular interest in vestry elections. By the adoption of triennial elections that apathy would, to a very considerable extent, disappear. Triennial elections were a necessary concomitant of the adoption of the system of aldermen. Whatever strength the objection as to cost formerly had it had greater strength now, for double-membered constituencies were now being adopted, and the only way in which annual elections in those constituencies could be worked would be by taking one-third of the districts each year.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON said he desired, as one who had lived for the greater part of his life in London, to put before the Committee certain considerations. The object of the Bill, as he understood it, was to improve local administration in London, and, as everyone who had taken part in such administration must be aware, there never could be a permanent improvement until there was an elevation of the social and intellectual standard of those who had the public spirit to come forward and take office. He might be wrong, but he had always believed that one of the reasons why, as a rule, the administration of provisional municipalities was unquestionably superior to that of London was to be found in the fact that there were annual elections. Speaking generally, municipal administration in the provinces had attained a higher standard than that which prevailed in London, and the London County Council elections were held every three years. His experience of London was that for a considerable part of the first year after the elections members were occupied in fighting their battles over again, and as soon as they arrived within measureable distance of the next election a large proportion of the time of the representatives of the local bodies was taken up with electioneering matters. He thought the excellent administration which existed in provincial municipalities was due to the fact that members gave a very considerable proportion of their time to the work of improving local administration. He was afraid that if honourable Mem-

bers adopted the Amendment gentlemen who could make plausible appeals to the electors, and whose special aptitude for electioneering was superior to their administrative capacity, would come into prominence, and these were not of a class that they desired to permanently dominate the new municipalities. He quite admitted that the question was a very difficult one, but he could not help thinking that the adoption of the Amendment would largely vitiate the benefit expected from the Act.

MR. BURDETT-COUTTS (Westminster) said he would venture to add his appeal to the Government to adopt the principle of triennial elections. He did not quite agree with his honourable Friend the Member for the Strand that the arguments on both sides of the House were very evenly balanced, because, to his mind, this question went to the very root of the Bill. As he understood it, the motive of the Bill was to create such public interest in local government as would lead to a restoration of the use of the franchise. The use of the franchise in these local elections had fallen away almost to nothing in many parts of London, and it had fallen away not only because of the want of dignity attaching to the local authority, but because these constant elections were never concentrated upon any comprehensive view or question. He could not himself see anything of importance in the argument which had been so freely used as to triennial elections introducing an element of politics in local government, because if politics were to be introduced in these elections they would be introduced just as much in the annual as in the triennial elections. Politics were introduced by the Party organisations. The Party organisations always existed, and they were only too glad of the annual opportunity of exercising their efforts, and, so far as his acquaintance with London went, they certainly did not retire from the exercise of those efforts on account of annual elections. But there was one argument which appeared to him to be of equal importance, and that was that by these annual elections they never obtained from the electorate a comprehensive view of the policy of the vestry. Elections were

Mr. Pickersgill.

often in the nature of snatch divisions: they turned on some incident of the moment, and their frequency detracted from their interest.

Mr. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said he thought honourable Members opposite attached too much importance to this issue. Considerable evidence was given on the point before the Royal Commission, and witnesses, who came from all parts of the country, were very emphatic, each in supporting the system to which he was accustomed. There doubtless was a good deal to be said as to the difference between London and the country in this respect. The opinion had been expressed that they must have these elections every year in order to get rid of the apathy that prevailed. Great boroughs like Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, however, were all very much excited when the annual elections came round. The official representatives of these great municipal boroughs gave evidence that the system of annual elections was very greatly approved of. But how were they going to get rid of the apathy of London? Surely if London were so easily moved it would be very much excited at the present moment. Here was a Bill before Parliament which dealt with the whole organisation of local government of London, and yet he feared very little opinion had been expressed with regard to it. The hope of getting persons engaged in London government whom they had not had before, charged with superior duties, was, he believed, more likely to be realised by getting one-third of the members elected every year than by electing all the members every third year. The opinion given before the Royal Commission by the representatives of provincial municipalities was that they had tried the existing system and approved of its simplicity and continuity, and that the administrative excellence of their corporations depended on its permanence. He suggested, therefore, that the system proposed in the Bill should in the first place be tried.

Mr. BOND (Nottingham, E.) thought that if they adopted the plan of having the elections every three years a larger number of voters would go to the poll, but it did not necessarily follow that they would get better representatives sent to the vestry. The excitement, if any, would be of a comparatively factitious nature, and would largely depend upon the interest that the local political organisations took in the matter. Nor did he think that the electors who would be induced by what he might call political pressure to go to the poll would necessarily select the men best fitted for the local governing body. It was quite true that London was different from provincial boroughs. There was no doubt that that was to be accounted for by the fact that in London there could not be the same kind of political life that they had in a provincial borough. The inhabitant of Hampstead, Chelsea, Fulham, or Kensington, went to his work in the morning in some spot far away from the place where he lived, and returned in the evening tired with his day's work, and disinclined to interest himself in local matters. In Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, and provincial towns, with a smaller population, the man who took part in local affairs was known by name to a very large section of the community. The local journal, which was the newspaper to which the great bulk of the inhabitants went for information and guidance, took note of the doings of the local councillors, and if they appeared at public meetings or took part in any way in the public life of the town, they were more or less conspicuous in the eyes of their fellow-townsmen. But the local affairs of Kensington or of Chelsea did not receive recognition in the papers which the inhabitants of Kensington or Chelsea were in the habit of reading. There might or might not be local papers, but those local papers were only read by a very small section of the community, and the consequence was that when the inhabitants of those places were asked to vote for persons to represent their interests upon the local councils they did not, as a rule, know anything about them. Therefore, when the names and qualifications of 18, 20, or 24

candidates came before them they would have to seek for guidance somewhere else. The guidance, of course, would be furnished in the shape of a list of candidates by the local political organisation, with a request to the elector to vote for the whole of the names. He thought everyone would agree that that was not a satisfactory way of arriving at the best possible men for the conduct of local administrative work, and for that reason he, for one, thought it would be rather a disaster if they were to depart from a well-established practice in favour of a proposal which had been commended to the Government by the opposite side.

*Mr. LOWLES (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Bodmin was quite wrong when he remarked that London was indifferent to the Measure now before the House. He would not have said that if he had been a London Member, because for the last month scarcely a post had passed which had not brought a considerable body of evidence showing the interest taken by local bodies and individuals in the question. Some change was wanted for the better; the state of affairs could not possibly be worse than it was now. In his own constituency he had known vestry elections in which only 5 per cent. of the electors had gone to the poll, and it was ridiculous to contend that this proportion represented the opinion of the constituency. A Bill was required to emphasise this new departure. He was confident that the result of making the elections triennial would be to give an additional importance to the contest, while inducing a larger number of voters to go to the poll.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: In expressing my own views upon this subject the difficulty in which I find myself placed is not diminished by the fact that, on the whole, I feel myself driven to a conclusion, not indeed very strongly felt, but clearly felt, which does not appear to be in harmony with a great number of honourable Members on both sides of the House who represent London constituencies. I cannot help thinking that something which fell from the

last speaker indicates the temper of mind in which this question is very naturally viewed. It has a great deal of justification, though I am not sure that it is of a character to enable the House to arrive at a right, sober, and judicious decision. My honourable Friend said that the present system of election to vestries is intolerable, that only 5 per cent. of the electors go to the poll, and that a change is called for. Now, Sir, I sympathise with my honourable Friend. The whole object of this Bill, no doubt, is to make a change—to substitute for the vestries, which have not risen to the full height of their opportunities in local government, bodies of higher dignity and authority. The mere fact that a particular form of election is associated with the bodies whom my honourable Friend wishes to dispossess is not, I think, by itself a very strong reason for making the particular change the honourable Member desires, and the arguments on the other side have not, perhaps, received due consideration from my honourable Friends. I admit that the effect of this Amendment, or of any Amendment, must inevitably leave a large element of conjecture. The House is dealing with a state of new things about which we may have guesses and prophecies, but with regard to which we have no absolute settled experience. No analogies drawn from the extra-metropolitan area, from the principal boroughs in the country, from the vestries, are conclusive as to the result we may anticipate from this or any other suggested change. But I think that my honourable Friends, in their laudable desire to produce this kind of interest in the elections which they think will bring forward the right kind of candidates and get them elected to serve in the new boroughs, have rather mistaken the character of the disease from which the community suffers and the nature of the remedy appropriate to it. Suppose that the result of adopting the Amendment will be that every three years there will be an agitation extending over the whole of London and affecting every borough in the vast area—an agitation similar in kind and carried out by the same bodies, supported by the same papers, by the same organisations as in the case of the London County Council elections—will they or will they not by that agitation of interest get a better class

Mr. Courtney.

of men on the vestry? I confess that I greatly doubt this. The only produce of that species of agitation on which my honourable Friends rely for augmenting the interest of local elections is not that the local man of position, anxious to do the practical work of a borough, will come forward. It is rather the gentleman, probably with great facility of speech, a man very desirous to serve his Party organisation, be that Party organisation Conservative or Radical, in some sphere or other in the House if possible, in the County Council if not, and next in the borough council. Perhaps it may be said that we all belong to that class of man—that we are all more or less professional politicians in that sense. But I ask my honourable Friends whether the particular class of man they wish to introduce in these borough councils is not of a somewhat different complexion; whether the particular class of men they wish to elect is not a man who has a solid desire to do the routine work connected with his district, and who looks upon local agitation and electoral contests as so much time abstracted from the proper work of his life. That is the kind of man I wish to get. I am far indeed from being convinced that the species of interest which will no doubt arise in having the elections triennial will produce that kind of candidate. We do not want all the agitation connected with a general election to accompany not merely the County Council and School Board elections, but the elections for the new bodies. It should not be extended, at any rate, without further thought, consideration, and experience of these new municipal boroughs. The right honourable Member for Bodmin referred to the experience of the great municipalities of the country. It is true that London differs from Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, or Leeds; but, though there are differences, human nature, after all, is the same in each; and I think it has to be shown that the differences are such that we ought to adopt a policy in London which not one of the great cities I have mentioned would tolerate. My right honourable Friend has quoted the evidence given before the Royal Commission. I have taken some trouble to make inquiries of those intimately concerned with electoral matters in these boroughs, and I cannot exaggerate the

strength of their opinion or the fervour with which they hold the faith that it is on the annual elections, and the annual elections alone, that the sound working of their system depends. It seems to me against that universal and strong experience that we have no counter experience to advance. My honourable Friends rely upon the experience of the vestries. But we all admit that the vestries have been a failure, and that it is not from the vestries that we can draw any true analogy as regards the future London local life. And, if that is so, should we not be in the highest degree rash in introducing into a Bill which has for its primary object to assimilate these new boroughs with the great extra-metropolitan boroughs—a principle of election which was against the unanimous experience and the strong conviction of every man who worked in the municipalities of these boroughs? Judging from the speeches we have heard, I gather that a majority of the London representatives do not hold the view which I have perhaps very imperfectly endeavoured to express. I may remind them, that not merely the vestries alluded to by my honourable Friend, but the Committee of the great Westminster conference, representing two or three millions of the people, and I do not know what rateable value, unanimously passed a resolution in favour of annual as against triennial elections. I think that fact should be borne in mind. But I should rely, in the advice I am now offering the House, more on the caution which ought to regulate our proceedings in this House, than on any cut-and-dried theory in which people profess to have absolute confidence. I have no such confidence. All I can say is let us in the inception of these new bodies learn from the experience of similar bodies outside London. If we find, after a fair trial, that the system is a failure, and that there is some mysterious and unexplained reason why London cannot, without the stimulus of a general election, get up and keep up any interest in local affairs, then we may have, though with sorrow and regret, to abandon the system of an annual election and substitute for it that of triennial election. Such a Bill would be very easily passed through the House; there would be no difficulty in making that change; but all I plead for is that before the change is made we should

have adequate experience of the system which has succeeded so well elsewhere. I should feel, so far as I am concerned, I should be taking a very heavy responsibility if under my advice the House deliberately rejected the universal experience of every borough outside London, and I ask it to take advantage of the lesson which these boroughs have given us, and accept the proposal in the Bill.

MR. BUXTON said he had listened with regret to the conclusion to which the right honourable Gentleman the Leader of the House had come, because he thought that, in consequence of the way in which the Debate had been conducted, and the large number of Members who had spoken in favour of the Amendment, the right honourable Gentleman would have considered it more favourably. The right honourable Gentleman had said that he would not alter the original proposal in the Bill for annual elections, because it had been a success in the case of the great municipalities outside London. He did not know why that argument should have such great influence with the right honourable Gentleman, because, after all, they had had no experience outside London of the triennial system, and it did not follow that they would not have been still more successful if they had tried the triennial system. If the annual system had been so successful in regard to municipalities outside London, why was it that the Government only a few years ago had adopted in regard to the London County Council and the county councils throughout the country the triennial system? He would say, as a London Member, and one interested much in London questions, that the triennial system had been extraordinarily successful in the case of the London County Council, and he believed that every member of that body, whether he was Moderate or Progressive, would admit that the triennial system had worked successfully, that it had created a widespread interest in the work of that assembly, and, in his opinion, had produced a better class of candidates than would have stood in the case of annual elections. He believed that they would get a better class of candidates for the new boroughs if the elections were tri-

ennial; at any rate, it ought to be left to the option of the electors to have the election annually or triennially. It had been said they suffered from two things in London; one was the apathy of the electors, and the other was the number of elections. Now, the London County Council represented to them the municipalities of other towns, and it was admitted that the interest in the London County Council was very great. Now, if the Amendment was not accepted they would be practically adding to the already large number of elections in London. The honourable Member for Nottingham had made a point about the large number of councillors who had to be elected for each ward in the new boroughs, but in some parts of London, for the School Board, for instance, they had to elect eight or nine members, and that had not created any substantial difficulty. After the very strong expression of opinion that had been given on the other side of the House, after the way in which this had been treated as a non-Party question, but especially after the hesitating speech of the Leader of the House, he thought he would be justified in pressing the Amendment to a Division.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University) said that, although the other London Members might hardly regard him as a London Member for the purposes of this Bill, yet at the same time he had had a good deal of experience of London Government. For the first few years he had had a seat in the House he sat for a borough in the country, and his experience in every way was similar to that of the honourable Member for Bodmin, and he was very glad to hear that his honourable Friend intended to support the Bill as it stood. For his own part, he believed that, good as the work of the London County Council had been in many respects, it would have been better if they had had annual elections instead of triennial elections. There was no doubt that if the elections came triennially there would be more excitement, but he was not sure that excitement was the atmosphere in which they would secure the best candidates. A question had been asked, Why it was

that there were not more elections in the City? Well, if elections turned on political considerations, everybody was likely to vote, but if they turned on purely municipal grounds, there was naturally not quite so much interest in the matter. Elections in the City were not fought so much on political grounds, and that was the reason why there were not many contests in the City. It seemed to him that the system the Government proposed would promote elections on purely municipal considerations.

COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) had hoped that annual elections would be done away with, if only for the reason that the people were apathetic when elections were so frequent. At least, it was only political electors who then voted. If the object was to further efficiency of administration and continuity of policy, that would be much better obtained by the election of the whole body for three years rather than by partial elections every year, while considerable expense would be saved. He had consulted many vestry clerks about the matter, but although they were in favour of annual elections because they made a certain amount of profit out of them, they admitted that it would be better for London if the election were triennial. He had examined very carefully different communications from vestries all over London, and he was glad to see that a great majority were in favour of triennial elections. He did not like to hear so much about the vestries having been a failure. They had conducted the business of London for something like 44 years, and the manner in which they had done so ought not to be disparaged. They deserved, on the contrary, praise for what they had done.

SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said that this was so important a point in regard to municipal administration that he ventured to say a few words on it. On the abstract question there was room for almost any amount of diversity of opinion. They were, therefore, thrown back on the cardinal fact of experience in municipal affairs. Well, that ex-

perience extended over half a century in all the large, as well as the smaller, centres of population. He was bound to say that the Association of Municipal Corporations, although they showed diversity of opinion in regard to Poor Law administration—had always, whenever this question was approached, been unanimous in favour of the annual system of retirement by thirds. The object of the Bill, as he understood, was to conform the local government of London to what had proved so successful in the provinces, and if the provincial experience had been so marked in regard to the great success of annual elections, they should pause before they risked an experiment in London, so different. His belief was that the annual system would eradicate politics from municipal elections—a very important consideration indeed. He would use an argument which would appeal to honourable Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, namely, that the annual system was essentially a democratic system. It secured that the representation should be a reflex of the opinion of the electorate of the moment. Under the triennial system, there might be a change in public opinion about many questions, yet the council might continue to enforce a policy which was far from a reflex of the opinion outside. With the annual system they had a more frequent change of the representative body, and, therefore, it became more directly representative of the opinion of the constituencies. It appealed more directly to the electors, while at the same time it preserved the continuity of general policy and administration.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR urgently appealed to the Leader of the House to allow the Division to be taken on independent lines. He did so more confidently because, during the Debate, opinion had been expressed altogether apart from Party considerations and associations. As a very old London citizen, he could, from experience, entirely agree with the statement that the local spirit had by no means the vitality here as elsewhere, and that was the reason why experience drawn from elsewhere entirely failed in regard to London. It had been said that annual elections were more democratic than

triennial. But he would point to the United States, where the elections were almost universally annual, and every sound political thinker there condemned the system as a besetting evil. Under that system, the elections had passed from the hands of the people into the hands of a certain number of political wire-pullers who arranged, convened, and influenced the political conventions. The result was obvious. The ordinary citizen got sick of the whole business, and neglected to go to the poll, and the elections fell into the hands of the political and municipal bosses—one of the most odious creations of modern democracy. He had been brought to the very opposite conclusions from the same facts as his right honourable Friend the Member for Bodmin. That right honourable Gentleman said that if they had triennial elections, there would be excitement, agitation, large meetings, and much public speaking. But when brought to the concrete, that meant that the citizens of London, who had hitherto taken no interest in local affairs, would begin to take an interest in them. The honourable Member had stated that only 5 per cent. of the voters in those constituencies took part. If they had annual elections they would continue to have this normal number. It was only by giving to these elections the seriousness which they would get by triennial elections that they could hope to get the people to take an interest in local affairs, and if they did not do this the Bill would be a failure.

***SIR J. BLUNDELL MAPLE** (Camberwell, Dulwich) said that he hoped to get an alteration made in clause 21, so that they might have these bodies elected at the first election for three years certain. No doubt they wanted better men, and this would guarantee that they would get good men, and afterwards one-third could go out annually. This was a new experiment, but London was different to other places, and it was too soon to say that one-third should go off in the first year. In several large clubs with which he was connected, they found it better to elect the committee for three years, and then allow a third of it to retire every year. Some time would elapse before these new bodies could be properly organised, and the mem-

Mr. T. P. O'Connor.

bers of the first body elected should have time to mature their thoughts. He should vote for the Bill as it was now drawn, hoping that clause 21 might be amended in the way he had suggested.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said the First Lord of the Treasury had admitted the value of Home Rule in his speech, and if there must be a Division it should be between the London Members. There seemed to be a disposition to treat the London Members as if they did not know their own business. They had had speeches from Members for all sorts of distant places, but so far as the opinion of the London Members was concerned, they were pretty unanimous in favour of triennial elections. He denied that the Westminster conference ever took place, although certain gentlemen were called together to discuss a scheme proposed by Mr. Wheeler. The local authorities were so heartbroken about this Westminster conference that they resolved to hold a genuine conference, to which the whole of the 42 governing bodies in the metropolis were invited. There were 26 local bodies who sent delegates, and they spent the whole afternoon in discussing these problems.

MR. BARTLEY: Who was the chairman?

MR. LOUGH said the vicar of Islington was the chairman of the conference, at which a resolution in favour of triennial elections was carried by 29 votes to 19. There was really no provision in the Bill for an annual election, because there was all the difference in the world between an election and a third of an election. There was as much difference between an election and a third of an election as there was between a horse and a third of a horse. A horse was a most useful animal, but a third of a horse was only fit for cat's meat. These bodies, like the House of Commons, wanted a clean sweep of the old gang occasionally. Another important objection was in regard to the expense, for there was nothing which the people groaned under so much as the rates. Annual elections were one of the most expensive luxuries of the whole of

their municipal system, for they would cost practically as much as triennial elections. The Member for Birmingham made a singular mistake when he said that annual elections would only be one-third of the cost, for they would be just as expensive as the election of the whole body. The right honourable Gentleman had carried the analogy of the country municipalities too far, for there was no central body in Manchester and Liverpool like there was in London, where they had the London County Council, which was elected triennially. He hoped they would continue to have triennial elections in London, instead of these worrying, costly annual elections. The conditions were not the same as in the country, and he hoped the Committee would treat the question from the standpoint of Home Rule and let the London Members decide the question.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) thought that the First Lord of the Treasury had altogether ignored the experience of London upon this subject. The voice of London was one chorus of condemnation of the present system. The people were worried and harassed, and put to expense, and they would have no more of it, and they would rather let their institutions go to the dogs than turn out at so many elections. What was one man's meat was another man's poison, and in provincial towns they had not so many difficulties to contend with as they had in London. From inquiries he had made he did not think that opinion in favour of annual elections was at all universal in the provincial municipalities. If this Measure was to reform local life, at all events they should reform that which would lead up to it. He did not think it was respectful to London, with 5,000,000 of inhabitants, that their experience should be ignored altogether, and he very much regretted the decision which the Government had come to. He hoped the Government would allow them to vote freely upon this question, for he felt sure that a large majority of the House were in favour of triennial elections. The machinery required to work an annual election would cost just as much as a triennial election of the whole body. The apathy complained of was due to the disgust of the electors on

account of the unnecessary worry they were subjected to, and that apathy would continue unless the cause of it was removed.

MR. DOUGHTY (Great Grimsby) believed that it was vital to the success of this Bill that they should have annual elections. He felt sure that if the municipal corporations of England were asked their opinion, they would not assent to triennial elections. He could not agree with the honourable Member for Islington that these would be only partial elections, for they could not adopt a better method of educating the people year by year than by getting them to register their votes annually. Some important municipalities had been spoiled by being converted into mere political institutions, and the best corporations were those who endeavoured to elect the best men, regardless of what their political views might be. If they only had an election every three years they were much more likely to have politics dragged in. He hoped, therefore, that the Committee would approve of the position taken up by the First Lord of the Treasury.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) thought it was advisable that the Government should consider whether it was not possible to allow the new bodies themselves to decide the question. If a majority of the municipalities of the country asked to have their method of election changed, would any Government drum up the county Members in order to keep things as they were? If power was given to the London County Council and to each vestry to choose between the two alternatives, surely they could grant the same privilege to these new bodies. If annual elections did not suit Walworth or Camberwell, why should they try to force upon those places what they did not desire to have?

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.) said he had had considerable experience of these local elections, and one of their greatest difficulties was the getting of suitable candidates and inducing the electors to go to the poll. He did not wish to say anything discourteous to the vestries, but when a comparison was

drawn between them and the municipalities throughout the country he wished to point out that there could be no analogy whatever. In London they did not get people to take any interest in local affairs until the London County Council was formed, for up to that time the vestries were in the hands chiefly of local builders. They were going to enlarge the areas of elections, and they hoped by doing that to get a better class of men to come forward. In the poorer districts, where the men were not known to each other, there would still be a difficulty in getting good men. It had been said that officials generally were in favour of annual elections, but that was only human nature, for they were always in favour of extra expenditure and greater importance being attached to their office. The tendency would be if they adopted annual elections to put greater power into the hands of the officials, and it would allow jerryandering and cliques or gangs to get into these new bodies, such as they had in the vestries of old. Surely this was a matter in which the wishes of the people of London should be consulted, and they should not seek to multiply these local elections.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I hope the Committee will not unduly prolong a Debate on which I think all that is to be said has been said, and very ably said, by Gentlemen on both sides. I recognise that the general tendency of London feeling is against the proposal of this Bill as it stands. I have had Home Rule attributed to me by Gentlemen opposite, and I entirely agree that if London spoke with the experience of the new boroughs it would be impossible for the Government to resist their united voice, and no Government would attempt it. The advice I have given I have based on the fact that London has really not got that experience of the system which is proposed, but the country has, and if we take this experience and balance it against the non-experience of London the verdict must be in the direction of the proposal in the Bill as it stands. The answer to that, made by my honourable Friend and by other honourable Members on the other side of the House,

Captain Norton.

is that London has had experience in vestry elections, but I do not think that the vestries are at all parallel to the new borough councils. I do not wish to labour that point, but I desire to throw out the possibility of some course which may be accepted, if not perfectly satisfactory, as an arrangement which may reconcile both sides of the House. I have indicated that if London had the experience of the new boroughs and were to decide upon triennial elections I should not resist their view. I suggest that we should put something in this Bill which will enable the various parts of London to have a trial of this annual system, and give to these new boroughs the power of changing that system if they think it requires changing after they have had some experience of it. There is a very close analogy to this course in the Act of 1894. In that year I believe the Government brought in their Bill in the shape in which I have brought in mine, and I believe they were subjected to something like the ordeal that I have been subjected to in defending this proposal, and they introduced the compromise, which I would now suggest to the House. If my proposal meets with general approval the result of that course would be that some boroughs might adopt the annual system of election and some the triennial system, and I see no reason why that line should not be adopted. There might be some advantage in it; but at all events each locality, judging by its own needs and its own wishes, would settle by a two-thirds majority, subject to the veto, which I presume would rarely be exercised, of the Local Government Board, what form of election it would have. If that compromise commends itself, on the whole, to both sides of the House, I, at all events, am perfectly ready to give up my view on the subject.

MR. BUXTON said he understood the right honourable Gentleman to offer that the new municipalities were to be elected for one year, and subsequent to that they would have the option of choosing whether their elections should be every year or triennially. If, the right honourable Gentleman had put it in the opposite way, that the first election should be for three years, and

allow them to decide whether subsequent elections should be annually or not, he would have withdrawn his Amendment, but upon the question of principle he must take a Division.

MR. COHEN said he was very much in favour of triennial elections, and should have supported the Amendment, but in view of what had been said he should now accept the compromise suggested by his right honourable Friend. He understood that the borough councils would be elected together in the first instance, and that an opportunity would be given them of deciding what should be their procedure hereafter. He thanked the right honourable Gentleman for the handsome way in which he had met their wishes.

MR. STUART asked the right honourable Gentleman for some further explanation with regard to the arrangement which had been suggested. Was it the intention that the first election should be for three years, and then the council should determine before the end of the first year whether they should proceed to retire by thirds or not?

MR. LOUGH said that so long as the question of the duration of these new bodies was left to the boroughs themselves to decide he most strongly appealed to his honourable Friends to accept the compromise. He hoped a simple majority of the council would be allowed to decide the point.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: A two-thirds majority.

MR. LOUGH thought a two-thirds majority was contrary to precedent, and he asked the right honourable Gentleman to consent to leave the matter to be decided by a simple majority.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: There is a precedent for what I suggest in the last sub-section of clause 23 of the Act of 1894. Of course, the exact phrasing of the sub-section will not do for this Act, but it shows the nature of the compromise which I suggest.

MR. BURNS (Battersea) reminded the right honourable Gentleman that since the Act of 1894 was passed there had been a general concurrence throughout the country, and certainly in London, that vestries and guardians should come under the triennial election system, and all come out at once. The whole of the boards of guardians which came under that sub-section had expressed themselves in favour of the triennial system, which applied to the London County Council and the London School Board. Since the Parish Councils Act was put in force there had been general dissatisfaction with the annual appeal to the electorate. He thought honourable Members should differentiate between municipal life in the provinces and in the metropolis. In the provinces there were not the same number of elections as there were in London, which were due to the special circumstances of London's complex life; and as both sides of the County Council had agreed that three years should be the period for the district councils, he appealed to the First Lord of the Treasury not to still further confuse London life by having annual elections. (Cries of "Agreed, agreed!") If they were agreed he was not, and he was going to exercise his right. He thought the triennial system was by far the most preferable method and best adapted to London life. The suggestion made by the First Lord of the Treasury, although conciliatory, was very confusing, and would lead to the new councils having a "send off" under conditions which would not make for the dignity which this Bill claimed to give them.

MR. G. R. WEBSTER pointed out that the guardians had decided in favour of triennial elections, and he believed they had better men on the guardians than, as a rule, on the vestries.

EARL PERCY said that what they wanted to discover was whether annual elections prevented the best men coming forward. The Act of 1894 gave the power of deciding the period to the councils, but in this case he thought the best thing to do would be to give the power to the Local Government Board.

MR. BUXTON said that after what had been said he would not put the House to the trouble of a Division, and he begged leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

“ Clause 2, page 2, line 1, after ‘ three,’ insert ‘ and not exceeding six.’ ”—(Mr. H. Robertson.)

MR. H. ROBERTSON said that he realised the fact that the number of councillors was smaller than the number on the vestries because a ward of 30 would be reduced to a ward of 15, but that appeared to him to be much too great.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I entirely agree with the principle which animates my honourable Friend in putting this Amendment on the Paper. I do not think he need have any fear that the representatives of the wards will be excessive, and I think the Privy Council can be trusted to deal with this subject.

MR. STUART thought the proposal might very well remain as it was.

MR. H. ROBERTSON said that after the explanation of the First Lord of the Treasury he would withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

“ Clause 2, page 2, lines 1 and 2, leave out ‘ to the rateable value as well as.’ ”—(Captain Norton.)

CAPTAIN NORTON explained that the object of his Amendment was to prevent the application of a pernicious principle in relation to London as a whole. This Bill carved out London into a certain number of areas, and left the poorer parts to be dealt with by the Commissioners. He thought this might lead to

the jerryandering of the wards, and this might occur if they decided to divide the whole of the South East of London into two immense municipalities. In that part of London along the river side great warehouses and wharves existed, and that portion would be divided into rich and poor wards. The riverside portion had a high rateable value and a comparatively small population, and it might occur if the district was divided into five wards that two of those wards might contain quite two-thirds of the inhabitants of the whole borough. That might give a preponderating power to those who, so far as lighting and sanitation were concerned, had less interest in the borough than the more populous wards. Those who had warehouses which were highly rated did not dwell within the boundaries of these municipalities, while those people who dwelt in the poorer wards were the mechanics and workers of various kinds who lived in that particular locality week in and week out; their wives and families were permanently domiciled there, and they had no chance of escape from that area. Therefore, it was only right and proper that population, and population alone, should be the basis in the granting of councillors for these new areas, because the efficient management of the parish in lighting and sanitation was of the utmost importance to the poorer class of people who spent their lives in those thickly populated localities.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I hope that the honourable Member will not press the Amendment. The several Acts dealing with wards, down to the most recent of them, have laid down the principle of defining them according to the double qualification of population and rateable value.

MR. PICKERSGILL said that Parliament had, since 1894, abolished rating as a basis for the local franchise in London.

MR. BOUSFIELD (Hackney, N.) expressed the hope that the influence of rateable value would not be diminished.

MR. LOUGH urged that good local administration was most needed in those areas where there were the largest and poorest populations. In Islington there were four wards each returning nine members, but having populations varying from 17,000 to 33,000.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 212, Noes 114.—(Division List No. 114.)

Another Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 2, after the word "wards," to insert the words—

"Provided that the powers and duties of the London County Council, under section five of the Metropolis Management Act, 1855, and section fifteen of the London County Council (General Powers) Act, 1893, as amended by section forty-two of the London County Council (General Powers) Act, 1895, which relate to alteration of the number of vestrymen to be elected for the wards of a parish, and to the re-arrangement of the wards of a parish, shall apply with the necessary modifications to the councillors and wards of the metropolitan boroughs created by or under this Act."—(*Mr. Trevelyan.*)

MR. TREVELYAN (York, W.R., Elland) pointed out that there was no machinery by which there could be any re-arrangement of wards in the event of an increase of population. The power which was at present vested in the London County Council had been exercised to the general satisfaction of the people. On the Second Reading of the Bill the First Lord of the Treasury said he was not in the least jealous of the County Council. Some of them were rather sceptical as to that statement, but the right honourable Gentleman had now an opportunity of showing beyond all doubt that he had confidence in the County Council and in its ability to carry out the work for which it existed.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL (SIR R. FINLAY) said he agreed that arrangements should be made in such cases as the increase of population, but the Bill provided for that by machinery which already existed for municipal boroughs throughout the country.

MR. BURNS said that metropolitan opinion was unanimous that the County Council had exercised this duty exceedingly well, and he saw no reason why it should be deprived of this power. They wanted this power to be exercised promptly by a body that knew the locality.

*SIR F. POWELL (Wigan) said he could state from personal experience that in two cases with which he was acquainted—namely, Cambridge and Wigan—wards had been altered under the Municipal Corporations Act in a very satisfactory way.

MR. HALDANE (Haddington) said the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act were applicable to borough councils who applied on very special and rare occasions for alterations of their wards, but he questioned whether the same elaborate machinery was appropriate to the present case. They were dealing with matters which related not to one great municipal corporation, but to a number of municipal corporations. The London County Council was familiar with the work, and surely the simple, tried, and inexpensive way was the most satisfactory.

CAPTAIN JESSEL (St. Pancras, S.) said it seemed to him that the honourable Member who had just spoken had forgotten that in every case the alteration of the wards must be approved by the Secretary of State, and therefore it was simpler for the borough council to go direct to the Secretary of State than for the new London boroughs to go first, of all to the London County Council and then to the Secretary of State. For, after all, it was with the Secretary of State that the ultimate decision rested.

*SIR C. DILKE said he thought his honourable and gallant Friend who had just spoken did not quite understand the point at issue. As far as regarded the merits of the question, he could not conceive what defence could be made by the Party opposite for adopting in this matter a different practice from that which had been adopted by the county councils all through the country. While the power was in the hands of local bodies local satisfaction was almost invariably given.

MR. BUXTON said he thought the honourable and gallant Member for St. Pancras had somewhat misunderstood the present position of the matter. He understood him to say that there was as much difficulty and as much machinery in connection with the exercise of the power under the London County Council as there would be under the Government. At present the thing was done by the County Council in the ordinary course without any trouble; there was no necessity for any inquiry, no complaints had been made, and it cost the rate-payers nothing. But the proposal now adopted by the Government would necessitate great cost, great delay, and great difficulty in carrying out. In the present case they were only dealing with very small matters which necessitated the alteration of the existing boundaries, and machinery which might be very valuable and possibly necessary for the original creation of wards was cumbersome and costly as applied to such matters as the sub-division of wards. To his mind it was simply a question as to which was the most simple and economical process. The existing system had worked with great satisfaction; there seemed to be no necessity under the circumstances to alter it, and he appealed to the right honourable Gentleman the Leader of the House to unfold to the Committee the object and the advantage of making the alteration. He could only think that it was made with the view of taking from the Council a power it at the present moment exercised to the general satisfaction. There could be no other reason, because he did not think the right honourable Gentleman could deny that under the proposed arrangement there must be greater cost, greater delay, and greater chance of injustice than there could be under the present arrangement.

MR. STUART said the honourable and gallant Member was in error in supposing that the procedure was easy in the case of the Municipal Corporations Act. He had had a good deal to do with the private Bills of the House, and he believed he was right in saying that that method of changing the wards of the municipalities of the country was a dead letter.

*MR. R. G. WEBSTER believed that whatever complaints might be made against the Metropolitan Board of Works, complaint was never made of their action in this respect. He sympathised to a certain extent with the idea that the Government had in their minds. It was, he supposed, to give more independence to the new London boroughs, and to assimilate them to the county boroughs. But he thought that in this respect it had been shown that the system in the county boroughs did not work nearly so well as the present system in London.

MR. PICKERSGILL said these adjustments of boundaries were being made by the county councils almost every day with the greatest possible ease, with the greatest possible facility, and with the greatest satisfaction to everybody concerned.

MR. LOUGH said the analogy of the provincial councils was not only the proper, but the most recent one. He could hardly think that the Government would adhere to the decision announced by the Solicitor-General. The Government were going out of their way to import into the Bill machinery which was not working well and was so unsatisfactory that even the municipalities had ceased to use it.

*MR. BOND expressed the hope that his right honourable Friend would accept the Amendment. The present procedure was working well in London, and, on the principle of leaving well alone, the concession asked for might, he thought, well be made.

MR. J. SAMUEL (Stockton) also appealed to the Government to accept the Amendment, and thus allow the London County Council to do what they had previously done with full satisfaction to the local authorities.

COLONEL HUGHES was bound to admit that the London County Council understood this question. They had performed the duties of dividing wards in a satisfactory manner, and he thought that they could be trusted to perform the duty as well as any other body that could be created.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am quite sure that the London County Council have exercised the functions of altering boundaries where such alteration was required with probity, discretion and great local knowledge. But that does not, I confess, affect the view I take of the proposal of the honourable Gentleman opposite. My view of the relation between the County Council and these boroughs is that in all central matters the County Council should be supreme, but in all matters that are not central the whole business of local government in the new boroughs should be carried on without the reality or the appearance of interference from or subordination to the County Council. That being the principle embodied in the Bill, it appears to me that if we give to external authorities the right to deal with boundaries, that right should not go to the County Council—not because they have misused their powers, or were at all likely to do so, but because it was not in conformity with the general principles upon which the Bill has been constructed, and the general lines on which its foundations have been laid. What is that complaint of the honourable and gallant Friend behind me, which is an alternative to the one which is now before the Committee? The only objection I have heard is that an appeal to the Privy Council is a very costly and a very long proceeding. It has been alleged by an honourable Gentleman on the other side of the House that an appeal to the Privy Council remains for years unanswered, and also that it is costly.

MR. STUART: I did not say that the appeal was a long time before the Privy Council, but that the local authorities, knowing that the appeal was costly, took a long time before they made the appeal.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Perhaps I misunderstood the honourable Gentleman. The delay that occurs is not due to any *laches* on the part of the Privy Council, but to the fact that the only machinery that the Privy Council can put in operation is one essentially costly and over-elaborate. Well, I have made inquiries

on the matter and cannot affect to give an independent judgment upon it; but there is another provision in the Bill which I think may afford a fair solution of the question, and that is the analogy of the action of the county councils when they want to alter their own boundaries. Certainly, so far as their own internal divisions are concerned, they have the power to appeal to the Local Government Board, and that Board sends down an inspector. I have made inquiry, and the Under Secretary of the Local Government Board informs me that it is an extremely cheap and also a rapid process. I think, therefore, that when we come to a subsequent part of the Bill where my honourable Friend's Amendment would appropriately come in, it may be found desirable to substitute the more modern machinery of the Local Government Act of 1888 for what the honourable Gentleman regards as the cumbrous machinery of the Municipal Corporations Act. That I will carefully consider. I hope the House will understand that no reflection was intended to be cast on that august body—the London County Council—but it appears to me that this is one of those matters which does not directly concern it. I am not willing that these new municipalities should be in any sense subordinate to the London County Council, though, of course, in all matters of central concern the London County Council must be, and ought to be, supreme.

MR. HALDANE: The right honourable Gentleman the Leader of the House has started a new proposal.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: What we are now discussing is the Amendment of the honourable Gentleman opposite and a possible alternative.

MR. HALDANE said it was the alternative to the London County Council proposal that they were now to debate, and therefore they must take it into consideration. The proposal to make use of section 27 of the Act of 1888 was different from going to the Privy Council, which was an expensive piece of machinery compared with what was proposed in the Amendment. ~~It was per-~~

fectly plain that the real reason for introducing this piece of machinery was the desire of the Government to keep the London County Council out of any department connected with these new boroughs. He quite understood the reason, but he did not think it was satisfactory, and would in many cases lead to expense and delay.

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 69; Noes 152.—(Division List No. 115.)

On the return of the CHAIRMAN, after the usual interval—

MR. W. F. D. SMITH moved as an Amendment—

"Clause 2, page 2, line 3, leave out from 'that,' to end of sub-section, and insert 'the number of aldermen shall be one-sixth of the number of councillors, and the total number of aldermen and councillors for each borough shall not exceed 70.'"

He hoped the Government would accept his Amendment, the more so because when the question of aldermen was being discussed, the First Lord of the Treasury pledged himself that the number of aldermen on each council would be considered hereafter. There was a precedent for the course which he suggested. The proportion of aldermen to councillors in the London County Council at the present time was as nearly as possible one to six, and when the suggestion was made in 1888 it was accepted without demur by the Minister in charge of the Bill. There was one argument in favour of his Amendment which he thought of importance. Where a number of local authorities were amalgamated, many vestrymen would of necessity lose their seats, and it was possible that some of the localities might feel themselves to be under-represented, and if they had rather more members to elect under the Bill, that feeling might be to a certain extent minimised. He did not think himself that the number of aldermen should be insignificant, but at the same time they ought not to be preponderatingly numerous. And he really believed that the proportion of one-sixth was more suitable than that proposed

in the Bill. At any rate it would meet an argument used by an honourable Member on the other side of the House that the honour of alderman was being made so common that it would be no dignity at all. If the Government accepted his Amendment the proportion of aldermen to councillors in London would be very considerably smaller than in the boroughs in the country.

*MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea) was perfectly certain that the acceptance by the Government of the Amendment moved by his honourable Friend would give universal satisfaction throughout London to all those over the country who were interested in the local government of London. It should be remembered that the system to be set up by the Bill was a new system, and that the new borough councils, composed partly of aldermen and partly of councillors, would be substituted for bodies which at the present time were purely popularly elected. Some regard should also be given to the very large number of aldermen that would be created by the proposal of the Bill for the whole area of London. He was certain that the system would cause less friction if the proportion of aldermen was rather less than in the Bill as it stood.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL said that the argument brought forward in favour of the Amendment was certainly very strong, and on behalf of the Government he was prepared to receive it.

*MR. R. G. WEBSTER felt quite certain that a sufficient number of proper persons could be found inside the areas to undertake the duties and accept the position of aldermen. The duties on these bodies would be, for a matter of fact, purely local, and not, as in the case of the London County Council, the administration of the affairs of the whole metropolitan area, and it seemed to him best to leave the administration of their local affairs to residents in the boroughs, without the interference of those not directly interested in the locality.

MR. STUART was glad to see that the Government had gone as far as they had in reducing the number of aldermen. Most people would have preferred that there should have been no aldermen at all. He regretted that there should be any, but he should sup-

port the Amendment, as he thought it was perfectly useless to take any other course; and after all, half a loaf was better than no bread.

MR. J. BURNS said he could not allow the opportunity to go by without protesting against one-sixth of the councils being aldermen. Aldermen were not required at all, and if he could reduce the number he should do so. In his opinion aldermen were not only useless, but positively dangerous, and the position ought to be abolished. He believed that they had been incorporated into the Bill with the object of suppressing progressive activity in local government. He predicted that in a very few years the borough councils would be disgusted with their aldermen, and he thought and hoped that they would do away with them as speedily as possible.

The Amendment was agreed to.

CAPTAIN JESSELL was called upon to propose an Amendment, but did not answer.

MR. STUART said, before passing from the Amendment of Captain Jessel, he wished to know what course it was proposed to take with regard to it. Did the Government propose to adopt it?

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL said that it would probably be more convenient to bring it forward at a future period in the shape of a separate clause.

Upon Sub-section 3,

SIR J. WOODHOUSE (Huddersfield) said perhaps the Solicitor-General would be able to explain this clause, which he had found it very difficult to follow. Sub-section 3 declared that the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1888, with respect to the chairman of the county council and the county aldermen shall apply to the mayor and aldermen of a metropolitan borough. He complained that the whole form of the clause was obscure and unintelligible, and if it could be set out exactly and in detail it would be to great advantage. The hon. Member then moved to insert at the beginning of the Sub-section the words, "Except as otherwise provided provided for in this Act."

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL said the Government could not accept the Amendment, and he could not himself see that there was any obscurity in the clause as it stood. It referred to other Acts which were all pretty well understood, and he saw no reason in this case to depart from the legislation which had been adopted in those Acts.

SIR C. DILKE desired to associate himself with the view which had been put forward as to the clause being absolutely unintelligible as it stood, and said he was supported by a great weight of opinion. High legal authorities differed very greatly as to what the words really meant.

MR. PICKERSGILL thought that in sub-clause 3 legislation by reference had been carried to an extreme which had never been previously reached. One of the objects of the Bill was, he believed, to give greater dignity to these local bodies by giving them a mayor, but sub-clause 3, as it stood, enacted that the mayor should be called chairman. That was one of the extraordinary results which followed from the form which the Government had adopted.

MR. LOUGH said he hoped that the Government would make some attempt to meet the objections to this clause, which nobody understood. He appealed to the Solicitor-General to postpone the discussion upon it in order that another Amendment might be brought in. So far as he could see, the Solicitor-General was not so strong in his objection to the clause being amended as he was to the form of the Amendment proposed. He thought if the discussion was postponed the clause might be satisfactorily dealt with later.

MR. BUXTON deprecated the practice of legislating by reference which had crept into Parliament during late years. Although it was apparent that the Solicitor-General had given this clause great attention, it appeared to him that if the clause passed into law in its present form it would be very difficult for anybody elected to these district councils to know what his duties were. The clause referred to other Acts of Parliament, and the difficulty of the Committee was that they did not know

under which of those Acts the clause was to come. He thought that the matter should be made quite clear and be put into such a position that people would know how they stood.

MR. STUART was not quite certain that the words might not have to be added before the Committee reached the pith of sub-clause. One of the difficulties that he felt was whether the Local Government Act of 1888, which was referred to, applied to London or not.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL accepted the Amendment, stating that when he first read the clause he read it to mean that the Local Government Act, so far as it applied to London, applied to this case; but upon further consideration and looking further back, he found it specially stated that aldermen should be one-sixth, and he gathered from that that was not so. He agreed that the words "except as otherwise provided in this Act" should be placed in the beginning of the clause.

Amendment agreed to.

MR. COURTNEY proposed to add to sub-section 3—

"Provided that any 12 councillors may unite their votes in favour of one person as alderman, and such person shall thereupon be declared elected, and the councillors voting for him shall have no further vote in the election of aldermen."

He understood that under the Bill as it now stood the aldermen would be elected for six years, and that one-half of them would retire every third year. If in a council there were 60 elected members there would be 10 aldermen, five of whom would retire every third year. The object he had in proposing the Amendment was to secure that the 60 councillors, when electing the five aldermen, should be able to elect them in proportion to their own opinions, so that the five aldermen should represent as far as possible the whole of the councillors. The past history of the municipal corporations of the country showed that up to the present time the majority of the council had complete control in the matter. The majority of the London County Council had not, in the election of aldermen, used their power auto-

cratically, but had recognised the right of the minority to representation on the aldermanic bench. He, however, wanted to secure that that representation should be obtained, not by grace or favour, which might raise awkward questions from time to time, but by means of simple automatic machinery perfectly intelligible to the electors. In the case of a council having 60 councillors his proposal would mean that any 12 councillors might agree in choosing A. B. to be their alderman. Thereupon A. B. would be elected alderman and the 12 councillors would retire from the process of election for that term. A second 12 might, if they liked, choose C. D. to be their alderman, and a third 12 and a fourth 12 might choose E. F. and G. H. respectively. If the whole 60 were divided in that way, by spontaneous action, into groups a perfect representation would be obtained. If only three groups of 12 each chose aldermen in the way he suggested, the remaining 24 councillors would fill up the two vacancies in the ordinary fashion—namely, by a mere majority. From the point of view of machinery there could be no objection to his proposal, while from that of principle it was impossible to conceive a better means of obtaining a just and fair representation. He submitted that there would be no difficulty as to the machinery necessary to carry out his Amendment. The experience of the London County Council showed that the power now vested in a majority to secure for themselves the privilege of filling up the vacant places of aldermen should be exercised so as to secure for the different sections of the council their proportional representation of aldermen. He could supplement what he had said by a subsequent explanation if necessary, but his proposal was so simple that he failed to see how anyone could misunderstand it.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL said that the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Bodmin had moved this Amendment for what he called proportionate representation, but everything he had said would apply to every municipality throughout the Kingdom as well as the boroughs under this Bill.

Mr. Burton.

MR. COURTNEY: The principle might go that far, but the proposal only applies to this Bill.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL: And to county councils and all other bodies in connection with which similar elections might take place. He would much rather see a great principle of this kind dealt with in a Measure which would be applicable to all those bodies than by an Amendment which applied only to a particular case. He knew the great interest which the right honourable Gentleman took in proportionate representation, and he thoroughly agreed that there was no difficulty in the proposals that he made; but he did not like to adopt a principle in one particular instance which would go a great deal further, and ought, if it was adopted, to be made applicable in all cases. With regard to the practical side, whatever might be said against it, he thought that in practice the present system had not worked out so badly, and on these grounds he hoped the Committee would not accept the Amendment.

***MR. R. G. WEBSTER** said he was in favour of proportionate representation, and although he would have preferred to see his own Amendment upon this question, still he should support so far as he could that of the right honourable Member for Bodmin. He thought the system proposed in the Amendment was more equitable and just than the present. His own Amendment was somewhat similar to the one before the Committee, but his idea was that the two-thirds of the aldermen should be elected by the majority of the council and one-third by the minority, and that would not give the majority the same disproportionate advantage as at present. For a matter of fact it was about the proportion the majority on the London County Council granted in the aldermanic representation on that body on a recent occasion, but that was granted simply as a favour. His Amendment would give it to the minority as a right, and save all the trouble of conferences, interviews and other arrangements betwixt the leaders of the respective parties. Saying now, for instance, to take a concrete case, a given borough had to elect 50 councillors, of whom 26 were chosen from one Party and 24 from the other. Would it be equitable to give the power to the 26

councillors to select eight aldermen to increase their majority to 34. By the system he proposed the majority would elect five aldermen, and the minority three, and the respective parties would thus stand numerically at 31 and 27. In the event of the Committee not accepting the Amendment before them, he hoped they would accept some system by which all the aldermen should not be elected by a bare majority, and the minority have no power of electing any, except as a favour.

MR. ABEL THOMAS (Carmarthen-shire, E.) thought that the present method might be greatly improved upon in this respect, and he saw no hope of the Bill being effective if some difference in the election of aldermen was not made. In the county where he came from these matters were run upon political lines, and if the Liberals were in the majority in the council they always elected aldermen of their own political persuasion, and the Conservatives did the same. That was a system which ought to be avoided if possible. Under the circumstances, if the matter was pressed to a Division, he should vote with the Mover of the Amendment.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said that, in his opinion, if the Committee adopted some such suggestion as that which was now before it it would do away with a great many of the objections which many people had to aldermen. It was very damaging to the business of a council to have elected aldermen of all one colour, and he thought the minority ought to have a voice in their election. He should certainly support the Amendment.

***COLONEL HUGHES** said he thought that first of all 12 aldermen should be elected, but that in the subsequent elections six would be the number, assuming the total council to be 72.

COLONEL MILWARD (Warwickshire, Stratford-upon-Avon) said that chance vacancies very often occurred in county councils. Sometimes two vacancies occurred at the same time, and what he wanted to know was on what principle were those to be filled? He expressed the hope that the Government would resist the proposal.

MR. COURTNEY said that if the principle of the proposal were accepted it would be easy to amend the drafting. He was disappointed by the attitude which the Solicitor-General had assumed. The argument that if a particular proposition were accepted it would have to be extended to a hundred other cases was the old sluggish, lazy plea of the man looking for the first easy reason to say no. But the Solicitor-General had brought forward no other argument against this proposal. From the Solicitor-General he would pass to the Leader of the House—from the workman to the “boss.” It was well known that the Leader of the House was not only capable of understanding the proposition, but had actually voted for it on more than one occasion. Would the right honourable Gentleman condescend to say something more than the Solicitor-General had been able to say as a reason for refusing this proposal? It was a practical proposal; there was no question as to the ease with which it would work or as to its utility. It might be that in some cases county council majorities had thought it prudent to let in some of their opponents; but that was the exception, and not the rule. Our ideas were so dimmed and clouded in Party controversy that the best men were always on our own side. The great Darwin once said to him:—“What astonishes me very much about your action in the House of Commons is that you do not regard politics as an experimental science, that you do not try here and there how an experiment will work and, if it succeeds, extend it.” Here, then, was a case in which to try an experiment. It might be said that he was a fanatic, a faddist, who could not look at both sides of a question. But here was a practical, simple suggestion, dealing with a practical, simple matter. Everyone knew the jealousies which arose over the election of aldermen to the county councils and how difficult it was to get the best men. Without considerations of political bias his plan would give an opportunity for the introduction of the best men for the work, and he hoped his right honourable Friend would give some reason that would at least not excite wonder for not adopting in relation to this matter a principle he had himself supported both by vote and voice.

SIR J. B. MAPLE said he was opposed to the institution of aldermen. Their presence on the London County Council had been the cause of the introduction of political feeling, and he therefore approved of the suggestion of the right honourable Gentleman.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: My right honourable Friend has made a suggestion which has the advantage over others he has offered that no Member can pretend that he does not understand it. It has no doubt been the objection urged against representation proposals from Hare's downwards by those who wished to be considered practical that they could not understand them, but in many cases they did not and do not wish to understand them, being accustomed to the simple plan of working matters in the House and in subordinate assemblies by a simple majority. My right honourable Friend escapes the objection that his proposal could not be understood, but not on that account is it likely to meet with favour from the general body of the house. I have myself voted with my right honourable Friend on a previous occasion; and, more than that I, myself, brought in a Local Government Bill for Ireland in which minority representation was included. My own belief still is that unless the scheme of last year had been devised we should either have to leave Irish local government alone altogether or we should be driven to some form of minority representation. I am convinced that nothing but the clearest consciousness that a great injustice would be done to the minority by not giving them representation would ever induce this House or the majority of Englishmen to accept what an honourable Member just now called a fancy franchise. In the matter of aldermen, there was not that overmastering sense of probable injustice that would drive the Committee into accepting the Amendment proposed by my right honourable Friend. It is perfectly true that some minorities have artificially kept themselves in a majority in borough and county councils by the misuse and abuse of the system of aldermen, but practically no one can contend that injustice to individuals happened therefrom or that any great difference occurred in the government of the com-

munity interested. If we had to deal with the case of Ireland, the matter would be different; it would have been necessary either to leave the whole subject alone or to try some form of minority representation. That does not arise in this Bill, and I do not believe my right honourable Friend has the least chance of inducing the House of Commons to accept his Amendment. He suggested that unless the House chooses occasionally to try an experiment it would never be able to judge of the value of any innovation, but as the father of these nascent boroughs I do not wish any rash experiments tried upon them. I should like something more mature to be taken as the subject of the proposed experiment, and if it were found to work well, I should be very glad to see it extended to the boroughs which we are occupied in creating. There is one other point which I would bring before my right honourable Friend. He has assumed that the fight will be between two parties—let us call them, for the sake of argument, Progressive and Moderate—and that whichever Party is in the majority will elect a solid mass of its own way of thinking. That has been true in certain cases of the past, and may be true in certain cases in the future. But the 10 councillors in his plan may not at all be within the organised fold of either of the two Parties and they might bring in a very inexpedient addition from outside. If the Amendment lower down on the Paper, proposing a selection of aldermen from London citizens, is carried, it is evident that these 10 councillors might bring in from outside somebody very indifferent as far as carrying out the work of the borough was concerned. That may not be a practical danger, but I rather think it is. It would not be a practical danger in a House like this, but I do not think that an ordinary borough council would be improved by the sort of addition I have in my mind. We avoid that if we make a Party responsible for the election; they might have a kind of concrete responsibility extending far beyond 10 councillors, and therefore, although they may be tempted to elect persons of their own way of thinking, they have a kind of corporate responsibility which would prevent them from committing extravagances or excesses in the election of aldermen. I would suggest to my right

honourable Friend that nothing will be gained by pressing his Amendment to a Division, because I am convinced the Committee would never consent to accept the novel principle he proposes unless there were a probability of extravagance or injustice, and that they are prepared to maintain the system which prevails in our boroughs all over the country.

MR. COURTNEY said he had much sympathy with what his right honourable Friend had said, but he did not think he would examine his arguments. It really depended upon his right honourable Friend whether they would initiate a change which would be of great public advantage. He would not press his Amendment to a Division, because it would be only a caricature, and he was quite content if the Committee allowed him to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. BILLSON (Halifax) moved—

“In clause 2, page 2, line 11, after ‘borough insert ‘provided that no person shall be eligible as an alderman who is not a councillor at the time of his election as alderman.’”

He said he regretted that aldermen could be selected from any district in London. He had the greatest objection to it because, as the new boroughs were local bodies, they ought to have people from the locality on them who would take an interest in the affairs of the district, and that would be militated against if they could select aldermen from any other district in London. It was not unreasonable if they were to have aldermen that they should be members of the council, who had perhaps for many years given their services to the community, and who, not caring to face their constituents again, should have an opportunity of being elected to the honourable position of alderman, in which they would remain undisturbed for six years. The opposite result had been followed on many councils, the dominant majority endeavouring to make their domination as permanent as possible by selecting all the aldermen of their own Party. He heard with satisfaction the statement of the First Lord of the Treasury, that that practice had almost entirely died out. His honourable Friend the Member for Barnsley told him that for 20

years it was the practice in Manchester not to select aldermen otherwise than from the councillors. If his Amendment were adopted they would have to a certain extent a check upon the selection of aldermen, because if the selection were limited to members of the council no alderman could be elected who had not submitted himself to the votes of the constituency. In that way, public opinion would be brought to bear on the selection of aldermen.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I hope the honourable Member will not press to a Division his Amendment, which would greatly militate against the efficiency of the councils. Naturally, councillors who have the choice in their own hands would elect men in their own body in preference to outsiders, but there may be cases where it would be a great convenience and advantage to the council to be able to go outside. I do not see why they should be prevented from exercising that discretion, and it is a discretion which is not likely to be abused.

MR. STUART said it had been freely stated that the present arrangements for the election of aldermen had been utilised to elect defeated candidates, and a very unpleasant feeling had frequently arisen on that ground. There was a tendency in a Party which met together to elect one of their own number who had just failed at the poll, and there was a great deal of grumbling in such cases because the verdict of the constituency had been reversed. He thought that was a very sound reason for accepting the Amendment. He put it to honourable Members opposite whether he had not touched a difficulty which was common to both sides. That difficulty would, however, be avoided by accepting the Amendment of his honourable Friend, who he hoped would carry it to a Division.

SIR J. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich) said he would be pleased if the leader of the House would accept the Amendment; it was not moved in the interests of any Party, but in the interests of the purity of elections. There were many cases in which a man

was induced to engage in a hopeless contest, encouraged by the promise that if he failed he would be elected an alderman. That ought not to be approved of. He thought that that dodge for defeating the wishes of the ratepayers should not be encouraged. That was the common sense view of the question, and he hoped his honourable Friend would go to a Division.

MR. BUXTON said that, speaking simply for himself, he was sorry he had to disagree with the views of his honourable Friend in the matter. The point was, would they get better aldermen if they confined their selection to members of the Council? If they were to have aldermen at all, he should like to see the area of selection as large as possible. His honourable Friend had stated that aldermen would be elected from candidates defeated at the poll; he himself showed the fallacy connected with that view. The man who stood for a constituency in which he had very little chance of being successful, rendered a service, not only to his Party but also to the ratepayers, by giving them an opportunity of recording their opinion.

CAPTAIN NORTON said that the Government would stultify themselves if they did not accept the Amendment. If the new boroughs were to be separate municipalities as the Bill proposed, on what principle could they go outside in order to find aldermen? Moreover, he thought they would be doing an injustice to those within the municipality, as there would be a great temptation to go outside in order to obtain aldermen. Many of them were not in favour of having aldermen at all, but if there were to be aldermen it was only right and fair they should be chosen within the district.

Question put—

“That those words be there inserted.”

The Committee divided:—Ayes 87: Noes 187.—(Division List No. 116.)

THE CHAIRMAN: The next Amendment standing in the name of the honourable Member for St. Pancras ought to be raised as a new clause. It is a separate matter, not dealing with mayors or aldermen.

MR. STUART WORTLEY moved—

“In clause 2, page 2, line 11, to leave out ‘borough’ to the end of line 13.”

It was an Amendment consequential to one which had been already accepted.

DR. CLARK said he could not understand how it could be consequential.

Question put—

Negatived.

MR. LOUGH moved—

“In clause 2, page 2, line 13, at end insert, ‘Provided also that nothing in this Act shall entitle a borough council to pay to the mayor any remuneration.’”

He said he wished to know the opinion of the Government on the matter. At the first glance the Amendment might appear to be anti-democratic, but there was a great deal to be said for it. He believed that the Chairman of the London School Board received a salary for the first two years, but certainly not for the past 20 years. The Chairman of the County Council, although entitled to it, had never taken a salary. Seeing that they were appointing mayors all over London a great deal of expense would be incurred if they were all paid salaries.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL said that as the Bill stood it would be in the power of a council to pay its mayors such remuneration as it thought fit, and the Government saw no reason for departing from the ordinary law on the subject. The matter was entirely in the hands of the representatives of the constituencies.

MR. STUART said he was in favour of the clause as it stood, and hoped his honourable Friend would withdraw the Amendment.

MR. LOUGH said he had placed the Amendment upon the Paper in order to elicit the opinion of the Government on the subject, and he now asked leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. LOUGH moved—

“In clause 2, page 2, line 14, to leave out ‘or under.’”

He said he should like to have some explanation as to why the words were inserted. The sub-section read “except as otherwise provided by or under this Act.” It seemed to him that the words he proposed to omit might have a very dangerous tendency. They should remember that the Act rested, to a large extent, on Orders of Council, and if they were to be governed by the words in the sub-section, a very wide door would be opened. He should not be surprised if the words had crept in through some inaccuracy in drafting the Bill.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL said the words were not inserted through inadvertence. It was absolutely necessary to insert them in order to provide powers for the first constitution of the boroughs.

MR. ASQUITH: The words ought not to apply after the first constitution of the councils.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*MR. R. G. WEBSTER moved—

“In clause 2, page 2, line 16, to leave out ‘and auditors.’”

Nothing was worse in the administration of the vestries of London than the auditing of their accounts. In some instances men who were not in any way qualified were elected as auditors. One vestry elected a cabman as auditor. No doubt they do their best. But how can many of them understand the powers many Acts of Parliament give them to surcharge expenditure which the local authorities have *ultra vires* incurred. Under the Local Government Act of 1888 the London County Council accounts were very strictly audited, and the accounts of the board of guardians were also strictly audited. The whole of these accounts were kept for the whole metropolitan area under one system and audited by one Local Government Board inspector with the aid of only one assistant. Why in the interests of economy, efficiency, and uniformity they could not do the same in regard to these municipalities for London he failed

to understand. He ventured to urge the Government to do away with the old-fashioned, effete, and rotten system. He should be told that the system that he proposed was not that of the municipal corporations in the country, but they had to follow in many instances the Act of 1888 and the Act of 1854 as well as the Municipal Corporations Act. In the interests of economy, and taking into consideration the fact that at least 12 other Members, nearly all of whom sat on that side of the House and represented large London constituencies, had put down Amendments in the same sense as his, he trusted the Government would accept it.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said he could not accept the sympathy with the Amendment of his honourable Friend. The retention of the words his honourable Friend proposed to leave out would stereotype the existing system of auditing and effectively tie their hands for the future, which he thought ought not to be done. He did not, however, pledge himself to accept his honourable Friend's suggestion to have the work done by the Local Government Board auditors, but before the end of the Committee stage was reached he himself would bring up a proposal on the subject.

EARL PERCY (Kensington, S.) said while he was anxious that the auditors should be thoroughly qualified, he was in favour of the retention of the provision to allow them to be popularly elected.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said he could not accept his noble Friend's suggestion. The Government must be left free in the matter.

SIR C. DILKE pointed out that the existing audit was destroyed by the Bill as it at present stood.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said he would deal with that point later.

MR. RICHARDS (Finsbury, E.) hoped that the representatives of various divisions of London would be able to get away that night knowing that there was no likelihood of the suggestion of the

noble Lord being carried out. Men of position and large ratepayers constantly objected to the idea of electing auditors. These elections had been made very often for no other reason than that the men were members of a political party, and that something should be done for them. He recommended that the Local Government Board audit should be adopted, or that there should be a certain professional qualification in regard to the gentlemen appointed.

EARL PERCY said that his suggestion had been misunderstood. What he wanted was the appointment of professional auditors, but that they should be popularly elected.

MR. STEADMAN (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) said that the system suggested by the noble Lord was in operation in certain vestries in London. In his own vestry they had a system of appointing chartered accountants as auditors. But while they had a firm of chartered accountants to audit for their own protection, the law compelled them to have different auditors resident in the borough, so that the system was a mere farce. He hoped that the First Lord of the Treasury would adhere to the proposal that the elected auditor should be abolished.

MR. LOWLES hoped the right honourable Gentleman in considering the matter would adopt the most popular form, which was audit by the Local Government Board, and which gave universal satisfaction.

MR. HALDANE said that in Scotland, where they had not a Local Government Board audit, they had a system of professional audit, but that did not secure a uniform system. In the Local Government Board they had a perfectly organised machinery, which was working extremely well, and was administered by men who thoroughly knew their business. Although the Municipal Corporations Act did not apply to borough councils throughout England, still, if he was not mistaken, in all recent charters the Government insisted on a Local Government Board audit.

EARL PERCY said that the real reason why he objected to doing away with the popularly-elected auditors, and substituting for them the audit of the Local Government Board, was that it would introduce an invidious distinction between these boroughs and others in the country. The district auditors appointed by the Local Government Board were, he believed, in no sense trained auditors, and in the second place the system of accounts and balancing payments and receipts demanded by the Board made it absolutely impossible to compare one year's balance-sheet with another. If the Local Government Board would arrange for a system of audit by firms of professional accountants there would be very little objection to it. The Board of Trade had a power of audit in connection with electric lighting undertakings, and if the Local Government Board audit was adopted the result would be that a council might have to make up two different balance-sheets, which would add to the expense. The Government had a very useful precedent in this matter in the case of the University Act of 1874, under which the Universities were obliged to appoint an auditor who belonged to a firm of professional accountants, or who was approved by the Treasury. The area from which the Treasury elected an auditor was therefore very narrow.

SIR C. DILKE said that the reflection thrown on the Local Government Board audit system was by no means deserved. He had from time to time brought this matter of the appointing of auditors before the House in order that the men appointed auditors might be trained from an early age.

EARL PERCY: They are not trained accountants.

SIR C. DILKE said they were better than trained accountants: they were men who had first served as auditors' clerks, and had a thorough knowledge of local government accounts. So long as the Local Government Board

set its face against political jobbery in the appointment of auditors no complaints would arise.

*MR. SHARPE (Kensington, N.) thought that the suggestion of his noble Friend was well worthy of consideration. In his own college of Trinity, Dublin, there was a system of double auditors—an external auditor appointed from professional chartered accountants, and the internal auditor elected under the statutes from the senior Fellows annually. The report of the external auditor formed the basis on which the statutory auditor did his work.

MR. STUART hoped that as this was a public business matter altogether, the Government should look for auditing where it was thoroughly well done. He could say that the auditing of the London County Council accounts by the Local Government Board was thoroughly well done. The control was most efficient, and prompt steps were taken to call the council to account for anything in which they might have gone beyond their powers. He trusted that the Government would have no fancy audit.

MR. BURNS said that practical experience was the best test. The accounts of the Board of Guardians, of the London County Council, and of the London School Board were audited by the Local Government Board, and he did not see why the new boroughs should not have the same audit. A chartered accountant, however able, would confine himself to the balancing of income and expenditure, but the great advantage of the Local Government Board system was that the clerks who assisted the auditor had been thoroughly trained, and knew every legal charge.

The Amendment was agreed to.

CAPTAIN JESSEL moved—

“In Clause 2, page 2, line 20, at end, add—
‘Provided as follows—The quorum of the borough council shall be one third of the whole number of the council, and one-fourth shall be substituted for the numbers prescribed by section twenty-eight of the Metropolis Management Act, 1855.’”

He said he hoped that the Government would accept the Amendment, so that on many important questions the council would get a decent quorum of members.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL thought that the Committee would agree as to the quorum being too small. He suggested for the consideration of his honourable Friend whether it would not be better to accept one-third instead of one-fourth.

The suggestion of the Solicitor-General was accepted, and the Amendment, as amended, was agreed to.

CAPTAIN JESSEL further moved to insert—

"The Local Government Board may, on request made by a borough council in pursuance of a resolution of the council passed by a majority of two-thirds of the members present at a meeting of the council duly convened for the purpose, make an order directing that the whole of the councillors shall retire together on the ordinary day of election in every third year, and may on like request rescind any such order."

MR. ASQUITH: We discussed the substance of the honourable Member's question early in the evening, and I only rise now to make an inquiry, which is, whether "County Council" should not be substituted for "Local Government Board." In the ordinary course the County Council would be the authority, and I do not see the necessity of the Local Government Board being brought into this matter at all. Whatever authority is intended, whether it be the Local Government Board or the County Council, I assume it is to have some discretion in the matter; the word is "may," not "shall." I move that "County Council" be substituted for "Local Government Board."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I think the right honourable Gentleman is quite right in saying that the word "may" means "may" and not "shall." But the right honourable Gentleman is not aware that when, earlier in the evening, we discussed the arrangement of the words we came to the conclusion that it was desirable that these new borough councils, in so far as they

were subject to any authority at all, should only be subject to the authority of some Government Department.

MR. LOUGH expressed the opinion that the matter was not so entirely settled as the right honourable Gentleman appeared to think. The Committee had been assured repeatedly that these councils were not subject to the authority of the Local Government Board; but they had not reached the third clause before the Government went out of their way to put a stigma on the London County Council. It was admitted on all sides that that body had carried out its duties with perfect satisfaction, and yet when it came to such a question as this the Government wished to put the Local Government Board forward instead of the County Council. Remarkable ingenuity had been displayed by the Government by putting stigmas on the County Council. What should be done in this matter was to promote harmonious relations between these proposed new bodies and the central authority, which would not be done if the Government went out of their way to put a slight and a stigma upon it. He hoped that the Government would reconsider the matter before they took this step.

Question proposed—

"That those words be there added."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"To leave out the words 'The Local Government Board,' and insert the words 'The County Council'"—(Mr. Asquith.)

MR. ASQUITH: I am not satisfied with any sufficient reason as has been given for taking away this duty from the County Council and putting the Local Government Board in its place.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.) asked that the Amendment of the right honourable Gentleman might not be adopted, because he, as a member of the London County Council, desired to promote harmonious relations between the County Council and the proposed new bodies. He did not think for a moment that if this power were given to the London County Council that it would be exercised in an arbitrary manner, but at the same time there might be apprehensions

Captain Jessel. }

that such might be the case. He was quite sure that the Government would do wisely in rejecting the Amendment.

MR. STUART said he did not think there was much danger of disturbing the harmonious relations between these new bodies and the London County Council. There was no control given over the new bodies. He regretted that the Local Government Board was introduced unnecessarily into the Bill, because, while it was admittedly a hard-worked body, he did not appreciate what it had to do with London. The Treasury had more to do with London vestries than the Local Government Board. He thought this power should be given to the London County Council.

MR. BURNS expressed surprise that the honourable Member for East Islington should have advocated the transference of this power to the Local Government Board, having regard to the fact that the honourable Member had on several occasions expressed an opinion in favour of giving the County Council the control of the finances of these new bodies. Surely if the County Council was capable of exercising that function with impartiality, it was equally able to exercise the more formal function which was proposed by this Amendment with equal impartiality. It appeared to him that this was an attempt to deprive the County Council of some of the powers which they had up to now exercised with great judgment, and he implored the right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury not to strip it of its powers.

MR. LOWLES thought that the new councils would be more happy under the Local Government Board than under the County Council. He was fully persuaded of that fact, and he was quite sure that it was the object of the Government to make these new bodies as independent as possible, and not render them subservient to the London County Council.

MR. BUXTON remarked that already, by the Act of 1894, this power was given to the county councils in respect to the boards of guardians, and he saw no reason why it should not be given to

them now in regard to the proposed new boroughs. Certainly, no reason had been put forward for withholding this power from the County Council.

MR. BOUSFIELD agreed that in this matter the County Council had discharged its duties in an able manner, but he thought the local bodies would feel more independent if they were sent to the Local Government Board instead of to the County Council. By this proposal no slight of the County Council was intended. They were not taking away any powers from the London County Council. What they were considering was whether the County Council should have similar powers in connection with the new bodies to those they now possessed in connection with the vestries.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR said that as the local bodies had worked harmoniously with the London County Council in this matter, it would be unwise now to bring in the Local Government Board. The proposal would prove very disadvantageous, and would cause considerable friction. They were more likely to promote good feeling by frankly giving to the London County Council the powers in connection with the new bodies which they had hitherto held and exercised with advantage in connection with the vestries, and by showing the local authorities that it was to their interests as well as to the real interests of London that they should work in harmony with the central authority.

Question put—

“That the words ‘The Local Government Board’ stand part of the proposed Amendment.”

The Committee divided :—Ayes 186 ;
Noes 83.—(Division List No. 117.)

Question proposed—

“That those words be there added.”

And, it being midnight, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

BUSINESS DEFERRED.**COLONIAL LOANS FUNDS BILL.**

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

SOLICITORS BILL [H.L.]

Committee deferred till Monday next.

PALATINE COURT OF DURHAM BILL [H.L.]

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

SUPREME COURT (APPEALS) BILL [H.L.]

Considered in Committee; Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading (23rd February) further adjourned till Monday next.

IMPROVEMENT OF LAND BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING (CLAUSES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Committee deferred till Monday next.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading (9th March) further adjourned till Monday next.

INEBRIATES ACT (1898) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

COLONIAL SOLICITORS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday 17th May.

LIMITATIONS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday next.

PARLIAMENTARY DEPOSITS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Second Reading (8th March) further adjourned till Thursday next.

SHOPS BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading (21st February) further adjourned till Tuesday next.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION ACT (1879) AMENDMENT (NO. 2) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

TANCRED'S CHARITIES SCHEME CONFIRMATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday 1st June.

MERCHANT SEAMEN (RATING CERTIFICATES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till this day.

The House adjourned at Ten minutes after Twelve of the clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 5th May 1899.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat upon the Woolsack at fifteen minutes past Four of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

JONES'S DIVORCE BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to dissolve the marriage of Charlotte Jane Jones, the wife of Robert Colvill Jones, with the said Robert Colvill Jones, and to enable her to marry again, and for other purposes—Presented (on petition), and a copy of the proceedings in, and of the decree of divorce of, the Queen's Bench Matrimonial Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland delivered (on oath): Bill read the first time.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: North-West London Railway.

Also the Certificate that no further Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bill:

Brigg Urban District Gas.

And also the Certificate that no Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bill:

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

SOUTH ESSEX WATER BILL [H.L.]

The Order made on the 20th of April appointing certain Lords the Select Committee to consider the Bill, discharged.

GAINSBOROUGH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL (GAS) BILL [H.L.]

Reported with amendments.

HORSFORTH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL (WATER) BILL.

Reported with amendments.

HAMPSTEAD CHURCH (EMMANUEL, WEST END) BILL [H.L.]

Reported with amendments.

WICK AND PULTENEY HARBOURS BILL [H.L.]

Committee to meet on Monday next.

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH (CARDIFF) BILL [H.L.]

Committee to meet on Wednesday next.

NUNEATON AND CHILVERS COTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL WATER BILL.

Committee to meet on Wednesday next.

CLAY CROSS WATER BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

DUBLIN IMPROVEMENT (BULL ALLEY AREA) BILL.

Read the third time, with the amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

TAFF VALE RAILWAY BILL.

Brought from the Commons, read the first time, and referred to the Examiners.

LEIGH-ON-SEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL BILL [H.L.]

Reported from the Select Committee with amendments.

DUNDEE GAS, TRAMWAYS, AND
EXTENSION BILL [H.L.]

Reported specially from the Select Committee with amendments (costs awarded to certain petitioners).

WAKEFIELD CORPORATION BILL
[H.L.]

Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Burghclere be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee in the place of the Lord Boyle (E. Cork and Orrery); read, and agreed to.

South Essex Water Bill [H.L.]

Whitehaven Corporation Bill [H.L.]

Rochdale Canal Bill [H.L.]

Weston - super - Mare, Clevedon, and
Portishead Tramways Company (Light
Railway Extensions) Bill [H.L.]

Watermen's and Lightermen's Acts
Amendment Bill [H.L.]

Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.),

E. Denbigh,

E. Yarborough,

V. Gordon (E. Aberdeen),

L. Calthorpe,

L. Brougham and Vaux (chairman);

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet on Tuesday next, at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

GREAT YARMOUTH WATER BILL [H.L.]

The Queen's Consent signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee with amendments.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ROYAL OBSERVATORY (EDINBURGH).

Ninth Annual Report of the Astronomer-Royal for Scotland.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PRISONS (SCOTLAND).

Twenty-first Annual Report of the Prison Commissioners for Scotland, being the Sixtieth Annual Report on Prisons in Scotland.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

CANADA-AUSTRALIA.

Correspondence relating to the proposed construction of a cable across the Pacific Ocean.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

CYPRUS.

I. Annual Reports for 1897-98.

II. Report on Agriculture in Cyprus, by Mr. P. Gennadius, Director of Agriculture.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (1899)—ANNUAL
SERIES.

No. 2240. Spain (Bilbao and District).

No. 2241. Italy (Leghorn).

No. 2242. China (Samshui).

No. 2243. China (Foochow).

No. 2244. Netherlands (Curaçao and Dependencies).

No. 2245. Spain.

No. 2246. Ecuador (Guayaquil).

No. 2247. Egypt (Suakin).

No. 2248. China (Wachow).

No. 2249. China (Chung King).

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

INDIA (SUGAR).

Countervailing Duties in India—Correspondence and Act.

Presented by (command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

LUNACY.

Report to the Lord Chancellor of the number of visits made, patients seen, and miles travelled by the Visitors of Lunatics, pursuant to the Lunacy Act, 1890, between 1st October 1898 and 31st March 1899.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PHARMACY ACTS (IRELAND)
1875 AND 1890.

Order in Council, dated 1st May 1899, approving of regulations made by the Pharmaceutical Society.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PETITION.

VACCINATION ACTS.

Petition for amendment of; of Guardians of the Poor of the Rugby Union; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILL.

COMMONS AND OPEN SPACES BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Inclosure Acts, 1845 to 1882, and the law relating to commons and open spaces—Was presented by the Lord Burghclere; read first time, and to be printed. (No. 80.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

THE CRISIS IN THE CHURCH.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: My Lords, I beg to ask the Lord Bishop of St. Albans whether he intends to take any steps to stop the circulation of a manual, entitled, "Before the Altar," by his diocesan missionary, the Rev. H. Darwin Burton. In putting this question, I think it would be more suitable to your Lordships if I endeavour very concisely to refer to the plain teaching of the Prayer Book in respect of confession, and, having done that, I call the attention of your Lordships to confession as it is advocated in the manual "Before the Altar." Habitual confession is, indeed, taught in the Prayer Book, but the confession is always directed to be made to Almighty God. In the daily exhortation to confess morning and evening we are told—

"To confess our sins with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart, and, although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God, yet ought we most chiefly so to do—"

When? In private, in the confessional to a priest? No; but

"when we assemble and meet together before God, and most chiefly in public worship."

I would like to remind your Lordships of the fact that this commencement of daily service was not in the first Prayer Book, but was inserted in the second, and retained in our present Prayer Book. Provision for private confession was made in the first Prayer Book, but is omitted from the second, and is not in our present authoritative Prayer Book, and at the same time that this provision for private confession was omitted the public confession was put in. Under the present Prayer Book the priest is directed to pronounce absolution in morning and evening prayer for sins confessed, not to *him*, but to God. The confession is to God alone. The absolution is a declaration of His forgiveness to all penitent sinners. The principle of the Prayer Book is perfectly clear and plain—that you should examine your lives and consciences by the rule of God's Commandments, and then, where-soever they have offended, to confess yourselves to Almighty God. The words

of the first exhortation after prayer for a Church Militant in the Communion Service run as follows—

"If there be any of you who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience . . . let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister of God's word, and open his grief, that by the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice."

Let us first of all notice that, whatever this may mean, and whatever interpretation may be put upon it, it refers to exceptional cases only, and is not to be treated as an habitual or accustomed rule; but I think the meaning of this passage in the authoritative Prayer Book will become, perhaps, clearer by the light of the changes made in our present Prayer Book as compared with the first Prayer Book. In the first Prayer Book the passage read thus—

"And if there be any of you whose conscience is troubled and grieved in anything lacking comfort or counsel, let him come to me or to some other discreet and learned *priest* taught in the law of God, and confess and open his sin and grief *secretly*, that he may receive such ghostly counsel, advice, and comfort, that his conscience may be relieved, and that of us (as the ministers of God and of His Church) he may receive comfort and absolution, requiring such as shall be satisfied with a general confession, not to be offended with them that do use to their further satisfying the auricular and secret confession to the priest."

In the second Prayer Book the words "confess" and "secretly," and the last sentence about "them that do use auricular and secret confession to the priest," are all now omitted. In 1662, at the last revision which gave us our authoritative Prayer Book, the revisers proposed to insert the word "priest" before "the minister of God's Word," but Convocation refused to sanction the change, and the exhortation, as it now stands, may be lawfully read by a deacon, who may be a discreet and learned minister of God's Holy Word, but, as your Lordships are aware, cannot possibly give, even according to Ecclesiastical Law, priestly absolution. Another point to be noted is that in the first Prayer Book the form of absolution given in the visitation of the sick was ordered by a rubric "to be used in all private confessions." But in our Prayer Book this rubric is omitted, and the book contains no form of absolution for private use. It is necessary for me

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to call your Lordships' attention to the changes which have been made, and which appear in the authoritative Prayer Book, as I presume the right reverend Prelate, as well as every other member of the Church of England, is bound to adhere to the Prayer Book as it now stands. There is, perhaps, a more striking authoritative statement against the abuse of confession in the Homilies, which were set forth in the reign of Elizabeth "to be read in every parish church." They contain the authoritative teaching of the Church of England, and Article 35 directs that they shall be read in churches by the ministers diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people. In the Homily on Repentance we find the following—

"I do not say but that if any do find themselves troubled in conscience they may repair to their learned curate or pastor, or to some other godly, learned man, and show the trouble and doubt of their conscience to them, that they may receive at their hand the comfortable salve of God's Word, but it is against the true Christian liberty that any man should be bound to the numbering of his sins, as it hath been used heretofore in the time of blindness and ignorance."

And now to turn to the particular manual circulated by the Rev. H. Darwin Burton. Let us compare the teaching of this manual with the teaching of the Prayer Book. In the first place, this manual uses the language of transubstantiation, and in some passages uses that language in a most gross and materialistic form. The whole language of the manual is the language of a Roman Catholic manual. The Holy Communion is not mentioned; it is a "sacrifice" and a "sacrament." One chapter is headed, "The Holy Sacrifice in the Eucharist." On page 28 I find these words respecting the receiving of the Holy Sacrament—

"Kneel upright, and do not crouch. Receive the Lord's body in the palm of your hand, being careful not to leave or drop crumbs. Guide the chalice if it is not given into your hands, otherwise the priest cannot say whether you have partaken of the precious blood."

On page 33 in the prayer you are asked to make an act of faith, and these are the words—

"I believe that Thou my Saviour, true God and true man, art really here."

On page 38 are the words—

"I believe that Thy body and blood, Thy soul and Thy divinity, are in the Blessed Sacrament. Lord strengthen my faith."

And on page 66, after the Holy Sacrament has been received, you are asked to say—

"I adore Thee, O Lord my God, whom I know to be veiled beneath these earthly forms."

Then, my Lords, in another part of the book I find a sort of parody of what the author is pleased to call "Sins against the Commandments." I know that your Lordships are in agreement with the very strong feeling among Christian men generally, that the Church of England should be a broad and a comprehensive Church, but I would ask your Lordships how comprehensive, how tolerant, and how liberal is the Church likely to be, or is it likely to be presented to the people to be, if the teachings of this manual are to be maintained and sanctioned. Among the sins enumerated against the Second Commandment is the joining in schismatical worship, so that when Her Majesty attends a Presbyterian Church in Scotland she is, according to this manual, breaking that Commandment; and, in the same way, any of your Lordships are equally guilty when you attend Nonconformist places of worship. I have no hesitation in characterising the book as one which promulgates not only the doctrine of superstition, but of intolerant and intolerable bigotry. On page 24 of this manual appear the following words, headed, "Advice to Communicants"—

"If you have not hitherto been to get absolution from God's minister, or have not done so for a long time, yet feel you need it, you had better get another little book, such as 'Help to Repentance' or 'Pardon through the Precious Blood,' which will explain to you what to do."

Of course, I turned to the advice and directions contained in these Manuals, and I find that the Manual, "Pardon through the Precious Blood, or the Benefit of Absolution, and how to obtain it," is edited by a committee of clergy, and on page 14, I find the following words—

"Now if your conscience is burdened with sin, if you are in doubt and disquietude about your state, if you desire earnestly some assurance of God's pardon—"

I would call your Lordships' attention to the imperative language—

"You must, as the Church directs you, make use of the Ministry of Reconciliation. Go to some Priest in whom you feel confidence, and open your grief, that is, tell him all your sins. Lay the whole state of your soul clearly before him, and then listen with reverence and humility to his counsel and advice."

And then, in speaking of "In Confession," I find in both of these Manuals the following words—

"When you have confessed all that you remember, say, 'For these and all my other sins, which I cannot now remember, I most humbly ask pardon of God and of you, my ghostly father, penance, counsel, and absolution.'"

I would call your Lordships' attention to the fact that these Manuals have gone through a very large circulation, that "Pardon through the Precious Blood" is edited by a committee of clergy, and that "Help to Repentance" has been compiled by a canon of the Church of England. These Manuals break the principles of the Prayer Book and the principles of the Protestant Church. It is true you cannot compel men to confess before they go to Communion, but you can, by Manuals of this kind, make it morally compulsory for young people. Before I put my question, I think I ought to read to your Lordships a correspondence that has passed between me and the Bishop of St. Albans in regard to this matter. I see the reverend Prelate in his place to-day, but I am in great doubt as to the line the right reverend Prelate is going to take in this Debate. I communicated to the Bishop of St. Albans, merely as a matter of personal courtesy, my intention to bring this matter under the notice of the House. On Saturday last I received the following letter from the right reverend Prelate—

"My Lord,—I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date. I shall not be able to be in the House of Lords on Friday, 5th of May, as I have a confirmation on that day in a remote part of Essex. I am engaged with confirmations and other diocesan work nearly every day until Whitsuntide. Having carefully considered your question, I have come to the conclusion that if I were asked it in the House, I should have to say that in my opinion it is not in the interest of the proper administration of my diocese that I should answer such a question in the House of Lords."

On receipt of that letter I at once placed myself in communication with the Clerk of Parliaments, and asked him whether, under the circumstances, it would be more conformable to the traditions of the House that I should substitute for my Question a Notice to the effect that I would that day call attention to the distribution of this Manual, to the conduct of the Bishop of St. Alban's relative thereto, and to my correspondence with the right reverend Prelate on the subject. Following upon the letter came a telegram from the right reverend Prelate, in which he said he had arranged his work so that he could be in the House on Friday. I wish to speak in language of no personal discourtesy to the right reverend Prelate, but I must be excused if I speak somewhat plainly. The proper administration of his diocese is not a private or personal matter as between him and me. It is a serious public responsibility. As a Bishop of an Established Church, that responsibility is not to a sect, but to the nation and to Parliament. Mr. Burton is not an incumbent, nor the owner of a freehold. To stop his circulating this book cannot involve the Bishop in costly legal proceedings. His word is in this case the law. There is no third course open. Either the right reverend Prelate does or does not sanction this Manual and its circulation. If he declines to give an answer, or gives an evasive answer, the responsibility is his. I am acting within my rights, and I feel it my duty to bring before your Lordships' House, where such matters can be properly discussed, and where the Bishops can defend themselves, if any defence is forthcoming, this class of literature, this religious poison which is being widely circulated and sedulously instilled into the minds of young people for the purpose, I am afraid, of destroying the principles of the Reformation and the Protestant religion. I beg to ask the question which stands in my name.

THE BISHOP OF ST. ALBANS: My Lords, I claim the indulgence of your Lordships for one who has never had the honour of addressing this House before—the more so as the subject is in many ways a difficult and delicate one. I do not think that a theological discussion on the various points raised by the noble

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Lord would be altogether suitable, and I doubt if your Lordships desire it on this occasion. I think the fact of the noble Lord asking such a question raises a point of considerable difficulty and delicacy. Of course, I acknowledge that any question may be asked in this House, but I suppose your Lordships will allow that a person who is asked the question may very rightly consider whether it is altogether expedient that he should give an answer. There may be points raised which would really interfere with the due administration of matters. Just as one of Her Majesty's Ministers might refuse at times to answer a question because it would interfere with the administration of his office, so, considering the very delicate and difficult matters which a Bishop has sometimes to deal with, I venture, with all due respect to your Lordships, to submit that there may be times when a Bishop may feel he is not really justified, considering his duties to the Church, in entering publicly upon a discussion of certain points which may be claiming his private consideration. I think a Bishop has to consider whether he can rightly answer certain questions. I venture to call your Lordships' attention to the question which is asked. It is not asked about my administration of my diocese, not about any practice, not upon something I may be called upon in that way to justify in this House, but I am asked to state my intentions. I should regard it as a very serious matter if anybody was at liberty to rise and ask any Bishop his intentions with regard to various questions which may be claiming his consideration. It may be he is considering some matter which will have to come before him judicially, or which may have to come before a court of law. Is a Bishop to be called upon to state his intentions in this public and formal way, and thus commit himself in regard to matters as to which he may be called upon to adjudicate afterwards? I think I am entitled to treat this question, not merely by itself, but as one of a class, and I am entitled to say that I am not called upon to answer a question that may form a very inconvenient precedent. I do not think that it will be for the interests of the Church that a Bishop should be publicly examined in this House as to his intentions about the performance of certain spiritual duties

which are committed to him, and in which he has to exercise his discretion. I think that such a course would be, to say the least, extremely inconvenient, and I am quite sure it would raise such a feeling in his diocese that he would not be able to administer it. The question touches a very important point—namely, a book. There are not only Manuals, but a very large number of other books upon religious subjects, and it is open to any clergyman to give such a book to one of his people. I may say that Mr. Burton is a licensed curate. He has charge of a certain district, and it is not open to me—even if I desired to do so, which I do not—to dismiss him. He would have an appeal to the Archbishop. A licensed curate has a legal position, and whether he has or has not, I think it is intolerable to deal with a gentleman in a way by which advantage is taken of a certain position he occupies, when you are not allowed so to deal with others who are in a more privileged position. It is only right that a Bishop should give the curates in his diocese the same consideration he is bound by law to give to the incumbents in his diocese. Is a Bishop to be required to go through all the books that ever have been written on these controversies in order that he may have a list which he is to allow his curates to use in the distribution of books? Are your Lordships to lay down that each Bishop is to have an *Index Expurgatorius* for his own diocese; that each Bishop is to exercise a censorship over books? That will be what it means if you call upon a Bishop to vindicate or disavow the choice of a book by one of those working in his diocese. For these reasons, with the deepest regret to your Lordships' House, I venture to say that I do not think it is desirable in the interests of the administration of his diocese that a Bishop should be called upon to publicly declare his intentions, especially when the question raised does not relate to any public action in the performance of Service in church, but the private use of books dealing with religious subjects. Therefore, I hope your Lordships will not consider me guilty of any discourtesy if I decline to answer the question.

TRAWLERS' CERTIFICATES SUSPENSION BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That this Bill be read a second time.”—
(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, the dispute between trawlers and line fishermen, and the complaints which the line fishermen make against trawlers are matters which are well known to your Lordships' House, and have frequently formed the subject of legislation. Indeed, there was an Act of Parliament passed with regard to this matter so late as the year 1895. I do not, by this Bill, propose to alter the existing law, but what I do propose to do is to introduce a new penalty in order to enforce and make effectual the observance of the existing law. Under the existing law a trawler, when convicted of illegal trawling, may be fined up to £100 or may be imprisoned for a period not exceeding 60 days. These penalties have, however, up to the present time proved ineffectual. I have obtained a return of the number of convictions for illegal beam and otter trawling, and I find that in 1892 the number of convictions was nine, and the average fine £24; in 1893, the number of convictions 11, and the average fine £34; in 1894, the number of convictions five, and the average fine £50; in 1895, the number of convictions 25, and the average fine £22 10s.; in 1896, the number of convictions 20, and the average fine £47; and in 1897, the number of convictions 15, and the average fine £49. Of course, the number of convictions does not in any way represent the number of offences, and that is the most unfortunate part of the matter. Her Majesty's Government have done, I believe, everything in their power, and, using the authority given to them by the Act of 1895, have employed more vessels for the protection of the coast, but, unfortunately, the movements of these vessels are well known. Line fishermen feel a very strong sense of injustice, and they also feel that Parliament ought in some way or another to enforce the existing law. As fines are not found effectual, Parliament must look about for new penalties, and the question is, What penalty will be found

sufficient? Any penalty to be effectual must be a penalty of a sort which will infallibly reach the owner. By this Bill I propose that—

“Where the master of any trawl vessel shall have been convicted by any competent tribunal of the offence of fishing by means of either a beam trawl or any other trawl, or any modification of either of such two methods of fishing, in waters closed by Statute or by-law of the Fishery Board of Scotland to any such methods of fishing, the court or judge shall, in addition to any fine or other penalty that may now be legally imposed upon the master or owners of such trawl vessel, make an order suspending the certificate of registration of such trawl vessel for any period not exceeding six months and not less than 14 days.”

The next clause provides that—

“It shall not be lawful for the master or owners of any trawl vessel, in respect of which such an order shall have been made, to use or employ such trawl vessel for the purpose of trawling or fishing during the period of suspension mentioned in such order. Any contravention of this section shall be deemed a misdemeanour and shall render the owners liable to a fine not exceeding the estimated market value of the trawl vessel in respect of which such an order of suspension shall have been made.”

Clause 4 proposes that—

“Where any such order of suspension shall have been made a note thereof shall be endorsed upon the certificate carried on board of the trawl vessel in respect of which the order shall have been made, and such order shall forthwith be notified by the registrar, clerk, or other officer of the court or judge by whom it shall have been made, to the Board of Trade, and the Board of Trade shall thereupon enter such order against the name of such trawl vessel in a book to be kept for the purpose and to be called the Suspension of Trawlers Certificates Order Book.”

The 5th clause says that a certificate so endorsed, or a copy of such order certified by the Board of Trade, shall be deemed to be conclusive proof of the conviction and suspension to which it purports to relate, and the next clause provides that the authorities of any port in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, where any trawl vessel in respect of which such an order of suspension shall have been made may happen at the time to be, shall have power, upon notification in writing or by telegram of such order, to prevent such trawl vessel from putting to sea during the period of suspension mentioned in such order. The other clause is a technical one, and of no importance to the general operation of the Bill. The Bill

does not in any way interfere with any trawl owner or captain of a trawl vessel who conducts his fishing in a legal manner and within the statutory limits. All it does is to enforce the observance of the existing law. I do not say that this Bill will necessarily prove effectual. The penalty may be found not sufficient, but I think we should make an experiment, and it is for that reason that I venture to ask your Lordships to give a Second Reading to this Bill. I think the penalty proposed is worthy of a trial. I have invited criticism and advice from several quarters, and it has been pointed out to me that in the second clause I have proposed—

“That the judge shall, in addition to any fine or other penalty that may now be legally imposed upon the master or owners of such trawl vessel, make an order suspending the certificate of registration of such trawl vessel.”

It has also been pointed out to me that this really imposes a duty on the judge which it would be better to leave to his discretion. I quite agree in that view, and when the Bill arrives at the Committee stage I propose to submit the word “may” for the word “shall.” I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Lord BALFOUR of BURLEIGH): My Lords, I am able to go some length in agreement with the noble Earl who has moved the Second Reading of this Bill, because I believe the figures he has quoted go far to prove that the present state of the law and the penalties imposed upon trawling vessels infringing the Statute and by-laws against inshore trawling have not had the deterrent effect which we might reasonably have hoped for. I am not quite sure, however, that they have so completely failed as the noble Earl indicates; there has been an improvement in the last 12 months. The number of convictions in 1898 has been lowered to four, the total amount of the fines being £102. I think to some extent this result has been achieved by the greater efficiency of the arrangements for policing the inshore waters. The reason the penalties at present inflicted have not had the deterrent effect that had been expected is that they are imposed upon the wrong individual. I agree with the provisions

of the Bill to this extent, that I think a strong *prima facie* case has been made out for placing the penalty on the owner of the boat, rather than as at present on the master. I do not know why it has so long been the rule to impose the penalty upon the servants. I believe it is quite usual now to regard the servant as the chief offender, but in former days when most of the vessels engaged in fishing were sailing vessels, the skipper was largely the owner of the boat, and the rest of the crew had shares. In cases of that kind it was probably right to impose the penalty on the master, but at the present day most of the vessels which we have to deal with and prosecute for inshore trawling are the property of persons who are not themselves on board, and of limited companies, who are frequently indifferent as to whether the master is fined or imprisoned, and in such a case they simply put another master on board, and the infringement of the law continues. I think it is very desirable that we should amend the law to the extent of placing the liability for the penalty upon the owner instead of the master. I believe that the judges before whom these cases are brought are strongly of opinion that the right offender is not got at, and that accounts to some extent for the relative smallness of the fines which are imposed. I do not wish to be understood as charging trawlers generally with these practices. In fact, experience shows that the offences are committed by a few particular boats. During the last 12 months, and out of the 125 different trawling vessels which have been reported to the authorities for illegal trawling, 52 have been reported more than once, one more than seven times, eight more than five times, three more than four times, and 14 more than three times. This proves that there is a certain class of vessels engaged in this business which makes a regular practice of disobeying the law. Although I go some length with the noble Earl, with some of the provisions of the Bill I cannot agree. It would not be fair, for instance, to fine both owner and master for the same offence, except it is shown that both are equally guilty. I must say that I think the provisions of the second and third clauses of the Bill are unduly drastic and go too far. The

second clause empowers the Court to suspend the certificate of registration for six months, and that in addition to other penalties; but the following clause provides that if that order is disobeyed a sum approximate to the value of the vessel may be imposed upon the owner as a fine. I am informed that that might, under some circumstances, be as large as £2,000, and in extreme cases, £5,000. I say, without hesitation, that that is too large a power to put into the hands of the Courts around the coast. In saying that, I am speaking not only for myself, but for the Board of Trade. If these provisions, as they now stand, were to be passed into law, I think difficulties would arise as to what could be done with regard to foreign-owned vessels. I think the provisions of the third clause require very careful and serious consideration. The fourth, fifth, and sixth clauses deal with administrative arrangements, and are subjects for the Board of Trade more than for the Office which I represent. On the whole, and having regard to all the circumstances, I think it would be unwise to accept the Bill in its present form, but as there is undoubtedly a case for the alteration of the law in regard to trawling, the wisest course for the House to adopt would be to read the Bill a second time, and refer it to a Select Committee for careful consideration.

***LORD RUSSELL OF KILLOWEN:** My Lords, this is a subject of which I do not pretend to know anything, but I have had a communication from the Fishmongers' Guild requesting me to call your Lordships' attention to what is considered the injustice of some of the provisions of this Bill. The Bill was introduced in the House of Commons last year, and the National Sea Fisheries' Protection Association passed a resolution condemning it. The objections to which my attention has been called by the Fishmongers' Guild have been in a very material degree met by the observations of the noble Earl who has moved the Second Reading of this Bill. As the second clause stands in the Bill it would be obligatory on the magistrates, in addition to the fine, to make a suspending order involving the disuse of the trawler for six months, and if it were used within that period the offence might be followed by the confiscation of

the boat itself. That would be an extraordinary provision, and I am glad to hear that the noble Earl intends altering the clause, so as to give the magistrates power to exercise their discretion. Again, it is conceived that the Bill will bear hardly on British fishermen. This country has the right to legislate so as to affect foreigners only within the territorial waters. But this Bill is intended to operate outside the territorial waters, and, therefore, foreign trawlers would be free to do things for which British trawlers would be fined. The Bill will no doubt go to a Committee of a representative character, where all these matters can be thoroughly considered.

LORD TWEEDMOUTH: My Lords, I feel some diffidence in venturing to set up my opinion against that of one so learned in the law as the Lord Chief Justice, but I think he has given me some ground for doing so by himself confessing, in his opening remarks, that he was dealing with a subject of which he knew nothing at all. I cannot profess great knowledge in many things, but I think I do know something about fisheries and the conditions under which they are carried on around the coast. My noble and learned Friend referred to the views of the National Sea Fisheries' Protection Association. I have no desire whatever to throw doubts upon the good faith of the members of that association, but it is very well known to those of your Lordships who are acquainted with matters connected with fisheries that that body has been captured by the trawlers, and that, therefore, the views put forward by it are not the views of the general body of fishermen. It is natural that trawlers should not want to be subjected to more penalties for breaking the law than they can avoid, and they are quite right in opposing this Bill; but trawlers are only a small section of the fishermen of this country. In Scotland the number of boats belonging to line and net fishermen is 10,000. They have 40,000 men to man them, and a million and a half of capital has been sunk in them. The

Lord Russell of Killowen.

number of trawling vessels does not exceed 80, with a capital sunk in them of £400,000, and 700 men to man them. In Scotland the line and net fishermen land 10 times the weight of fish landed by the trawlers. There is no doubt that trawlers do a great deal of harm by destroying fish in a limited time on particular fishing grounds around the Scottish coast. In the course of a week or 10 days two or three trawlers will clear a particular ground from fish, and during the time that the ground takes to recuperate the line fishermen in the neighbourhood are shut off from catching fish. This is a great hardship. Therefore, it is quite in consonance with justice, and with the general good of the country, that some restriction should be placed on trawlers with regard to the particular ground on which they fish. This Bill does not propose to put a single new restriction on them. All it proposes to do is to add one more penalty which a judge may impose on trawlers if they break the conditions which Parliament has already imposed upon them. My noble Friend said he proposed to exchange the word "may" for "shall" in the second clause, and with that alteration I thoroughly agree. It seems to me that it is only right, in imposing this new penalty, to leave it to the discretion of the judge to decide whether the circumstances of the particular case warrant its imposition. The noble Lord the Secretary for Scotland criticised the third clause as going too far. I am rather inclined to agree with his criticism, but at the same time I do think that a very heavy penalty indeed should be placed on the owner who allows a trawler under his control to go to sea during the time it is disqualified by the suspension of its certificate. I am very glad my noble Friend has consented to the Second Reading of this Bill. I am quite sure that it will be fairly considered in Committee, and I hope your Lordships will not be satisfied with merely passing the Second Reading and considering it in Committee, but that you will endeavour to pass it into law during the present Session.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: In reply to the statement of the Lord Chief Justice I should like to say that this Bill does not affect British trawlers prejudicially as compared with foreign trawlers. I am quite willing to accept the course suggested by the Secretary for Scotland, and allow the Bill to go to a Select Committee for careful consideration.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (The Earl of DUDLEY): My Lords, my noble Friend the Secretary for Scotland has so well expressed the views of the Board of Trade in this matter that there is little necessity for me to say anything in addition. He pointed out that it is not only the second penalty that is heavy in this particular case. The suspension of the operations of a large trawler for six months would cause a loss of something like £2,000. I cannot help thinking that a penalty of that kind is out of proportion to the offence complained of. My noble Friend who moved the Second Reading of the Bill seems to think that it would not differentiate between foreign and British ships, but while it will impose new penalties on British trawlers, it cannot impose penalties on foreign trawlers guilty of the same offence. If the Bill passes in its present form, the friction that already exists, instead of being mitigated, will be increased to a considerable degree.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I am not going to enter into the vexed question of Scotch Fisheries, but I would like the noble Lord the Secretary for Scotland to inform me when the North Sea Conference is likely to meet, and whether the subject of the extension of the limit is likely to be referred to it.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND: It seems to me that that is a question which should be addressed to the noble Marquess at the head of the Government, but as I have been asked the question I will endeavour to answer it. In speaking

of the North Sea Conference the noble Earl probably refers to the North Sea Convention, which regulates fishing rights over that area. But there is a Conference about to assemble in the course of the present summer, at the invitation of the Swedish Government, to discuss certain matters in connection with scientific investigation in the North Sea. As to how far the Conference will be able to extend its inquiry into the subject of trawling I cannot express an opinion. I understand that in the original invitation it was intended to confine the matters discussed largely to scientific investigation, but at the present time the negotiations for the assembling of the Conference are still going on, and therefore it would be unwise for me to express any definite opinion on the subject.

Question put.

Bill read a second time, and referred to a Select Committee.

ALLOTMENTS (LONDON) BILL [H.L.]

To be read second time on Friday next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 1) BILL.

Read second time (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

METROPOLITAN POLICE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Read third time (according to order), and passed.

House adjourned at fifty minutes after Five of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 5th May 1899.

MR. SPEAKER took the Chair at Three of the clock.

NEW WRIT

In the room of the Right Honourable Sir John Robert Mowbray, baronet, deceased, for the University of Oxford.
—(*Sir William Walrond.*)

NEW MEMBERS.

Owen Morgan Edwards, esquire, for the County of Merioneth, sworn.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time upon Monday next.

LISBURN TOWN COMMISSIONERS BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

LOUGHBOROUGH AND SHEEPSED RAILWAY BILL [H.L.]

Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

SCUNTHORPE URBAN DISTRICT GAS AND WATER BILL [H.L.]

Read the third time, and passed.

KIRKCALDY CORPORATION AND TRAMWAYS BILL [H.L.]

Read a second time, and committed.

BRISTOL FLOODS PREVENTION BILL [H.L.]

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

METROPOLITAN COMMON SCHEME (HARROW WEALD) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Reported, with Amendments (Provisional Order confirmed).

Bill, as amended, to be considered upon Monday next.

GREAT YARMOUTH PIER BILL [H.L.]

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

NORTH PEMBROKESHIRE AND FISHGUARD RAILWAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

LONDON, CHATHAM, AND DOVER RAILWAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

BIRMINGHAM CORPORATION BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

CORK CORPORATION (FINANCE) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

DUBLIN CORPORATION (MARKETS) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP 4).

Mr. HOARE reported from the Committee on Group 4 of Railway Bills; That Sir John Kinloch, one of the Members of that Committee, was not present during the sitting of the Committee this day.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Mr. HOARE reported from the Committee on Group 4 of Railway Bills; That, to meet the convenience of parties, they had adjourned till Tuesday next at half-past Eleven o'clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

BELFAST WATER BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS CONFIRMATION

(ABERAVON, &c.) BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; Referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 176.]

CLYDE NAVIGATION BILL [H.L.].

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

BARTON-ON-SEA WATER BILL [H.L.]

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to Ilford Urban District Council (Rates) Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to provide an Annual Close Time for Trout Fishing in Scotland." Trout Fishing Annual Close Time (Scotland) Bill [H.L.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act relating to National Monuments in Churches." National Monuments in Churches Bill [H.L.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Education Department, under the Elementary Education Acts, 1870 to 1893, to enable the School Boards for Aberavon, Croydon, Walthamstow, and Willesden to put in force the Lands Clauses Acts." Education Department Provisional Orders Confirmation (Aberavon, &c.) Bill [H.L.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Trustees of the Clyde Navigation to construct new tidal docks, quay or wharf, river wall, high level cross ferry recesses, and other works; to extend the harbour of Glasgow; to borrow additional money; to confirm agreements with railway companies respecting Prince's Dock Branch Railway; and for other purposes." Clyde Navigation Bill [H.L.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to incorporate and confer powers for the supply of water upon the Barton-on-Sea Water Company." Barton-on-Sea Water Bill [H.L.]

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

LUNACY.

Copy of Report to the Lord Chancellor of the number of visits made, the number of patients seen, and the number of miles travelled by the Visitors of Lunatics between 1st October 1898 and 31st March 1899 (by Act).

PETITIONS.**EDUCATION OF CHILDREN BILL.**

Petition from West Hartlepool, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROCCERS' LICENCES (SCOTLAND) ABOLITION BILL.

Petition from Argyll, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROUND RENTS (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Petitions in favour;—From Maryport;—Tynemouth;—Pontypridd;—Llandudno;—Brecknock;—Littleborough;—Barry;—Prestatyn;—St. Olave's;—Tottenham;—Clerkenwell;—Edmonton;—Cardiff;—Nantyglo;—Barking;—and, Gillingham; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Gallatown;—Argyll;—and, Greenock (two); to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SERVANTS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Petition from Frimley, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Cleator Moor;—and, Denton; to lie upon the Table.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.

Petitions for extension to women;—From Gorton (three);—and, Blackpool; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW ACT, 1897.

Petition from Warwickshire County Council, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Attleborough;—Upwell;—Camberwell;—Brighton;—Longsight (two);—Great Yarmouth;—and, Blackpool; to lie upon the Table.

TEMPERANCE REFORM (THREEFOLD OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From Chanonry;—and, Paisley; to lie upon the Table.

TOWN COUNCILS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour;—From North Berwick;—and, Forres; to lie upon the Table.

VACCINATION ACTS, 1867 TO 1898.

Petition from Rugby, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.**MAILS (AMERICAN SERVICE).**

Return (presented 4th May) to be printed. (No. 176).

CYPRUS.

Copy presented,—of Annual Reports for 1897-8 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

Copy presented,—of Report on Agriculture in Cyprus, by Mr. P. Gennadius, Director of Agriculture (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

PRISONS (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, — of Twenty-first Annual Report of the Prison Commissioners for Scotland, being the Sixtieth Annual Report on Prisons in Scotland, 1898 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

ROYAL OBSERVATORY (EDINBURGH).

Copy presented, — of Ninth Annual Report of the Astronomer-Royal for Scotland (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT).

Copy presented, — of Return of Prices of Agricultural Produce for the years 1881 to 1898, inclusive (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

DISTRAINTS FOR POOR RATES IN IRELAND.

Return presented, — relative thereto (ordered 14th February; *Mr. Shee*); to lie upon the Table.

TREATY SERIES (NO. 11, 1899).

Copy presented, — of Exchange of Notes between the United Kingdom and Russia with regard to their respective Railway Interests in China (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, — of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2245 to 2249 (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (SUGAR).

Copy presented, — of Countervailing Duties on Sugar in India; Correspondence and Act (by Command); to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1894) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To make further provision for Parish Councils in Scotland borrowing for the purpose of providing public offices," ordered to be brought in by Captain Sinclair, Mr. Baird, Mr. Buchanan, Sir Thomas Gibson-Carmichael, Mr. Parker Smith, Mr. Renshaw, Mr. Robert Wallace (Edinburgh), and Mr. Wylie; presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday, 12th June, and to be printed. [Bill 177.]

QUESTIONS.

FOREIGN SEAMEN ON BRITISH SHIPS.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been directed to the evidence given in the action of the owners of the steamship "Moorish Prince," against the owners of the steamship "Bencroy," which vessels were in collision on 13th March in the North Sea, from which it appears that the man on the look-out on the steamship "Moorish Prince" was a Greek, and that the man at the wheel at the time of the collision was an Austrian, neither could speak English, and that their evidence had to be given before Mr. Justice Barnes through interpreters; and whether he will propose any remedy, by legislation or otherwise, to this state of things?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to the case referred to by the honourable Member, and although I am informed that the facts are as stated in the Question, I am advised that it was made clear in the course of the recent legal proceedings that the report by the look-out was properly given, and that the helmsman understood and carried out his orders. The concluding words of the judgment in the Admiralty Court were as follows—

"It seems to me that the defendants have not established that there has been any fault—

in the navigation of the 'Moorish Prince,' and the 'Bencroy' must be held alone to blame. I find that there was no improper porting on the part of the 'Moorish Prince.'"

As at present advised, I am not prepared to propose legislation on the subject.

IRISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AND BANKS.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Irish Local Government Board have expressed the opinion that the term "treasurer" in the Local Government (Ireland) Act applies to banks; and whether it is intended to include banking companies in the list of permanent officers entitled to compensation under the Act?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The Local Government Board has been advised that the term "treasurer" in section 83, sub-section 1, of the Local Government Act applies to banks. Having regard, however, to the terms of section 115, sub-section 19 of the Act the Board do not consider that a bank becomes entitled to compensation in consequence of the revocation of its appointment as county treasurer, in pursuance of the 30 and 31 Vic., cap. 46, sec. 2, and the transfer of the account to another banking company.

HOWTH AND BALDOYLE FISHERMEN'S GRIEVANCES.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary whether his attention has been directed to the repeated complaints made by fishermen resident in Howth and Baldoyle, county of Dublin, of the destruction or injury to their lines and nets by steam trawlers; will he explain why although specific instances in which steam trawlers have deliberately run into and destroyed nets and lines have been reported from the districts mentioned to the Irish Fishery Commissioners, that body has taken no steps to prevent such illegal acts or bring their authors to punishment; and what action the Government proposes to take with a view to put a

stop to this state of things which will have the effect of reducing the fishing population to beggary?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The complaints referred to were received by the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries, and were duly submitted by them to the Irish Government. Unfortunately the fishermen were unable to furnish the Inspectors with any evidence or information likely to lead to a conviction of the offenders. The whole question of illegal practices by steam trawlers off the coast of Ireland has been engaging the careful attention of the Irish Government. The Admiralty have consented from time to time to send, on the requisition of the Irish Government, one of their vessels to visit some specified locality; but they have expressed their inability to detail a vessel for sole employment on fishing duty. A special vessel, however, for this purpose is, in the opinion of the Irish Government, essential for effective action. I hope it may be found possible to deal more successfully with the evil under the provisions of the Bill about to be introduced for establishing a Department of Agriculture and other industries in Ireland. Meanwhile the Irish Government will, whenever practicable, seek assistance from the Admiralty.

MR. CLANCY: Is it not possible for the Irish Government to institute proceedings in specific cases which were submitted to them?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Yes, but we have to catch the offenders first.

MR. CLANCY: I would suggest that steps might be taken to detect them.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: As I have already explained, the Government have no vessel which would be required for that purpose at their disposal.

CRUISERS AND THE SCOTCH HERRING FISHERIES.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if the Secretary for Scotland will arrange for fishery cruisers to patrol the waters of the Island of Lewis and Island of Barra during the approaching summer herring

fishing in accordance with the practice of former years?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: The Fishery Board inform me that they are not aware of any reason for departing from their usual practice of having these waters duly patrolled.

THE STEAMSHIP "CARDINAL."

MR. M'GHEE (Louth, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is in a position to state if it is the intention of his Department to take any proceedings against the owners of the s.s. "Cardinal," which vessel left Pensacola in an unseaworthy condition, and foundered in the Atlantic?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): The case of the "Cardinal" has received the careful consideration of the legal advisers of the Board of Trade, and I am advised that not only does the evidence fail to afford a reasonable prospect of a conviction being obtained, but that it is insufficient to establish a case to justify even a committal by justices, either of the managing owner or the master of the vessel, under section 457 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894. In these circumstances, it is not my intention to institute proceedings in this case.

WATER SUPPLY OF DORNIC.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, having regard to the fact that the medical officer of health for Ross and Cromarty, in his Report dated 31st March last, states that the water supply at Dornic is still unsatisfactory, the Secretary for Scotland will have some inquiry made on the subject with a view to a suitable supply being provided?

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: I am informed by the Local Government Board that the annual reports for 1898 of the county medical officer and sanitary inspector of Ross-shire have only just been received, and that the Board, in accordance with their usual procedure, are in communication with the local authority of the south-western district of the county regarding the water supply of Dornic.

CROWN SALMON FISHERIES IN SCOTLAND.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will explain why the following salmon fishings in Scotland have been sold instead of being leased, namely: salmon fishings in Caithness, sold on the 15th May to Frederic Granville Sinclair, for £50; salmon fishings in Inverness, sold on 23rd May 1898 to Mrs. Christian Helen Jane Cameron, or Head, for £50; and salmon fishings in Argyll, sold on 18th November 1898 to James Arthur Campbell, for £100; and will he consider the expediency of arranging for Crown salmon fishing rights in Scotland not to be sold outright hereafter?

MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrew Burghs) (for Mr. RITCHIE): The sales in question were made under exceptional circumstances, the Crown title being in each case disputed, and litigation being avoided by the sale. Where no exceptional circumstances exist rendering a sale desirable, it is not the practice to sell Crown salmon fishings in Scotland.

EXPORT OF BRITISH SPIRITS.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfar): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will be good enough to state the amount of allowance, in the nature of draw back, paid in the years 1896-7 and 1897-8 upon the exportation of British alcoholic liquors or spirits from the United Kingdom; the amount, if any, of duty paid on such spirits so exported; whether the allowance in the nature of drawback so paid is paid to all exporters whether manufacturers or dealers; and whether such allowance is paid on the exportation of such spirits to the exclusion of all other British manufacturers; and, if so, for what reason?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): The amount of the allowance at 2d. per gallon on plain spirits exported was: In 1896-97, £35,849; in 1897-98, £35,635. The amount of the allowance at 4d. per gallon on compound spirits was: In 1896-97, £11,403; in 1897-98, £10,699. The allowance of

2d. per gallon is payable to the exporter, whether manufacturer or otherwise. The allowance at 4d. gallon can be paid to rectifiers or compounders only. The object of these allowances is to compensate the home trader for the loss and hindrance caused by the excise restrictions. No similar allowance is paid in respect of goods other than spirits. The amount paid to rectifiers and compounders as drawback in respect of goods on which duty had been previously received from them was: In 1896-97 £431,661; in 1897-98, £427,799. But this, of course, is merely a return of money actually paid by them.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS.

SIR W. FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I beg to ask the honourable Member for Thirsk, as representing the Charity Commissioners, whether the Commissioners have received the accounts for the years 1897 and 1898 for Lord Rolles' Charity connected with the University Press, Oxford; whether this charity was given for the benefit of the Press, and especially that out of it money might be lent to needy editors to assist them in their labour during residence at Oxford; and whether any money has been lent or offered unknown to any such editors during the last 30 years?

MR. GRANT LAWSON (York, N.E., Thirsk): The Commissioners have not received these accounts. The Trusts of the charity are as stated. The Report of the Oxford and Cambridge Commissioners shows that in 1873 the income of this charity was applied to the benefit of the University Press, as the special purpose of relief—to needy editors to assist them during their residence at Oxford—had then for some time failed.

SIR W. FOSTER: Is the charity applied to needy members of the University Press?

MR. G. LAWSON: I fancy that was the intention of the Trust.

BRITISH TRADE IN RUSSIA.

SIR H. VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can now indicate what arrangements Lord Salisbury proposes to make to second the efforts of His Excellency the Finance Minister of H.I.M. the Tsar to develop British trade in Russia, and particularly in the promising areas for iron and steel of Poland and the central provinces?

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford): It is the intention of Her Majesty's Government shortly to take further steps in certain districts to develop British trade, and the opportunity for encouraging our trade in Russia will be carefully considered.

PROPOSED COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU.

SIR H. VINCENT: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is in a position to announce the arrangements he has made as regards the formation of a Commercial Intelligence Bureau, where British traders can obtain all information concerning the prospects of, and openings for, British trade in any part of the world, and the best means of procedure?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): I am not in a position to make any announcement on this subject.

THE CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD.

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state how many bulls the Congested Districts Board has purchased since July 1, 1898, their breeds, and their average price if purchased out of Ireland; whether he can give the reasons why they were imported instead of being bought in Ireland; and whether he is aware that the recent Royal Dublin Society's show was a record in point of entries and quality?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): Since July 1, 1898, the Congested Districts Board have purchased 33 Short-horns, 34 Aberdeen Angus, 49 Galloway, and seven Redpolls bulls—the average price of each class of bull purchased out of Ireland being £29 5s., £30 10s., £21 14s., and £27 9s. respectively. Of these 123 bulls, 35 were purchased in Ireland. The reasons which influenced the Board in purchasing bulls out of Ireland were that at the time at which bulls were required the Board either could not obtain suitable bulls in Ireland or could obtain suitable bulls in Great Britain at lower prices than those demanded by Irish breeders for animals of similar quality, and that many Irish breeders are inclined to hold their cattle until the Dublin spring show, when it is too late for the Board to make the bulk of its purchases. As regards the third paragraph, the entries of bulls at the recent Royal Dublin Society's spring show exceeded those of any previous year in quantity. It is not the experience of the Board's representatives, who have purchased bulls at every spring show for several years, that the quality of the bulls, within the limit of the prices they could pay, was as good as usual. The Board was still in want of 25 bulls at the time of the show, but, when the high-priced bulls had been sold, could only find 10 that they considered suitable to be sent into the congested districts at prices which they were justified in giving.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY ELECTORATE.

Mr. COGHILL (Stoke-upon-Trent): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the fact that, of the graduates of the University of Oxford who have taken the degree of Master of Arts, only a very small number are entitled to exercise the franchise; and whether he will introduce legislation to secure that all Masters of Arts shall be placed on the register of electors, so long as the University of Oxford returns two representatives to this House?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): My answer to my honourable Friend, as he probably anticipates, is in the negative.

THE FOOT GUARDS.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office what is the establishment and what was the strength on parade of the three battalions of Foot Guards in Hyde Park on 1st May, individually, exclusive of the bands; and how many men in each battalion on the ground had less than six months' service?

Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.): In reply to the first part of the Question the figures are as follows:—3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards—on parade 528, establishment 882; 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards—on parade 427, establishment 882; and 1st Battalion Scots Guards—on parade 591, establishment 1,088. The differences between these totals are largely accounted for by the absence of 552 men at recruit and musketry drill, 383 on guard and other duties, 142 sick, leaving a total of 229 under establishment for the three battalions. The services of men who parade on any particular day cannot be given.

SUGAR COUNTERVAILING DUTIES.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfar): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade at what date the United States Government imposed countervailing duties on German sugar entering the United States; and whether he is able to give to the House a statement of the imports of German sugar into the United States during corresponding periods before and after that date, including the latest figures available?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: The rates of countervailing duties to be levied on sugar imported from Germany into the United States were fixed by a Treasury Circular dated September 22nd, 1897. The imports of sugar from Germany into the United

States during the eight months ended February, 187, were 642,000,000lb.; during the eight months ended February, 1898, 34,000,000lb.; and during the eight months ended February, 1899 (the last month for which statistics are available), 578,000,000lb.

INDIAN SUGAR TRADE.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfar): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he will give to the House the latest figures in his possession as to the imports of sugar into India from various countries, and the exports of sugar from India; and whether the two duties now levied on European sugar entering India result in a net protective duty of five per cent. in favour of the Indian producer?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The papers which I hope to present to Parliament next week on the subject of countervailing duties in India will contain the statistics desired by the honourable and gallant Member down to the end of February last, so far as they are available. A duty of 5 per cent. *ad valorem* was imposed in 1894 upon all imports into India except yarn and cotton goods, and this duty, imposed for revenue purposes, may be in its operation protective to the extent of 5 per cent. so far as it affects imports which compete with Indian products.

IRISH POSTMEN'S PAY.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether postmen are entitled to an extra day's pay for extra work on each bank holiday; if so, whether, in the county of Dublin and other parts of Ireland,

that additional remuneration has been paid in respect of any of the bank holidays of 1898, or of such of those days of this year as have yet come; and, if it has not been paid, what is the cause of the delay?

MR. ANSTRUTHER (for the SECRETARY to the TREASURY): Postmen are entitled to be paid *pro rata* for attendance on bank holidays, in addition to their ordinary pay. As far as can be ascertained, payment has been made in due course in Ireland generally, except as regards some of the country sub-offices near Dublin, where, it is regretted, delay appears to have occurred. Special inquiry is being made in the matter, and the honourable Member may rest satisfied that no time will be lost in making payment where warranted.

MOVEEN ELECTION.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork Co., N.E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the proceedings of Mr. Prosser, who acted as presiding officer at Moveen, Kilkee, county Clare, during the election for county and district councillors, and through whose want of knowledge the election was rendered invalid; if he will state when another election, properly conducted, will take place; and, will the sub-sheriff, who is responsible for the appointment of an incompetent official, be required to bear the cost of the new election?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: My attention has been called to the fact that through the want of knowledge of the presiding officer at Moveen, county Clare, the recent county council election has been rendered invalid. The Local Government Board are arranging for new elections in all district electoral divisions at present unrepresented or insufficiently represented. The Board has intimated to the under sheriff of this particular district that they consider he should, under the circumstances, conduct the supplementary election free of charge, and he has expressed his willingness to do so.

PROPOSED POST OFFICE AT NAUL.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether his attention has been directed to the necessity of adding a money order and savings bank department to the post office at Naul, county of Dublin; and whether there is any objection to his taking that step?

MR. ANSTRUTHER (for the SECRETARY to the TREASURY): The question of transacting money order and savings bank business at Naul, county Dublin, has recently been considered, but the estimated amount of business was found to be insufficient to justify the addition of such a department, except under guarantee.

FINANCE BILL.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Will the right honourable Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury inform the House on what day the Finance Bill will be taken?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I anticipate that the Finance Bill will be taken on Thursday.

WHITEHALL STATUE OF JAMES II.

MR. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if arrangements have yet been completed to push back the statue of James II. from its present position at Whitehall Gardens, so that it may be viewed to better advantage than at present?

MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: No, Sir; the matter is under consideration, and when a decision is arrived at, I will communicate with the honourable Member.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.**SUPPLY [9TH ALLOTTED DAY.]**

Considered in Committee.

[**MR. J. W. LOWTHER** (Cumberland, Penrith), CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, in the Chair.]

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1899-1900.**CLASS II.**

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That a sum, not exceeding £133,098, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1900, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Office of the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade and Subordinate Departments.”

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE (Exeter): said that before the Committee entered upon a detailed criticism of the Vote, he was anxious to detain it for a very few minutes while he submitted some observations in connection with the general position of the Department of the Board of Trade in the hierarchy of the State. His excuse in doing so was that during the last few years he had had the honour to be closely connected with the Associated Chambers of Commerce, and in that capacity he had had many opportunities of observing the multifarious duties discharged by the Board of Trade. It was possibly not within the knowledge of some Members of the Committee that when a discussion on the constitution of the Board of Trade took place in 1826 a motion was made, and carried by a majority of 11, that the President of the Board of Trade should receive a salary of £5,000 a year, and that his position should be made equal to that of a Secretary of State. In the course of the discussion **MR. ROBERTSON**, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, said that he himself had held the Office of President of the Board of Trade, and that, in his opinion, the duties of the office, both mental and bodily, were as hard as those of any Minister of the Crown. The President of the Board of

Trade at that time combined with his duties those of Treasurer to the Navy, for which he received a salary of £3,000, in addition to the £2,000 at which his salary was fixed. It might be of interest to remind the Committee that at that time the number of officials at the Board was only 24, whereas now there were between 500 and 600. He did not, of course, wish to weary the Committee with a great number of statistics, but it would not be without interest to remind them that in 1826 the total population in this country was, in round numbers, 20,000,000, and the pursuits mainly agricultural. The population now was some 40,000,000, and the pursuits of the people were rather commercial than agricultural. At that time the wealth of the country was estimated at something over three thousand millions. The last trustworthy figures that he had in his possession were those for 1885, when the national wealth was put at something like ten thousand millions, and, of course, it had considerably increased since. Taking the shipping tonnage in 1826, the total was something over two millions, mainly sailing vessels, whereas now it was nearly nine millions, mostly steam vessels. In the same way the railway mileage was, in 1826, 500, while now it was 21,500. Lastly, the value of the commercial exports in 1826 was £31,000,000, and now the exports were over £234,000,000. In addition to that, he would remind the Committee that an immense number of duties had been imposed on the Board of Trade since 1862. He was perfectly aware that there were many honourable Members who thought that some of those duties had been unnecessarily imposed on the Board. They had, however, been imposed on the Board, and its work had *pro tanto* increased. It was rather curious that in this country, almost alone amongst the leading countries of the world, the immediate interests of commerce were entrusted to a Minister who was at all events not nominally of the highest Cabinet rank. The Committee would remember that in 1879 a Resolution was carried in the House recommending the creation of a Department of Agriculture and Commerce which should be placed under the control of a Secretary of State. Although that Resolution was never given full effect to, and only a Minister of Agriculture was created, yet he thought it was the uni-

Sir Stafford Northcote.

versal feeling of the House that too much importance could not be attached to the vast commercial interests entrusted to the Board of Trade. If he had in any way made out a case, he thought the present was not an inappropriate time when Her Majesty's Government should take the question of the position of the President of the Board of Trade into their serious consideration, and he asked them either to appoint a Committee, or to take such steps as they thought fit, to see whether something could not be done to alter the position of that official. Nothing, of course, could be expected this year, and by the time that any practical steps could be taken next year the life of the present Parliament must necessarily be drawing to a close, and his right honourable Friend would not, unfortunately for himself, derive personally any great advantage from a change until, at all events, he and his colleagues had gone to the country. There was one other general consideration which prompted him to make these remarks, and that was that whilst he hoped and believed every right honourable Gentleman who was called upon to perform the responsible task of tendering advice to Her Majesty was a sincere advocate of peace, there were two Ministers who were, departmentally, bound to be the strongest peace advocates, namely, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade; in other words, it was their primary duty to foster that great commerce which was the very life-blood of our country. He thought that if the House could do anything to ensure that the President of the Board of Trade should be placed in such a position that he could speak with as high authority in the Cabinet as any of his colleagues, it would be worth the while of the House to make any sacrifice of public money.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): It is perhaps a delicate matter for one who has filled that position to which my honourable Friend has referred to say anything upon the topic he has raised. I will not, therefore, venture further than to bear my testimony to the fact that the work of the Department has increased enormously, and that increase has not been lessened by the fact that every few years some new function has been thrown upon it by statute. The work has become not only very heavy, but

very multifarious. There is the enormous subject of shipping, there is the large subject of railway management, there is the great subject of bankruptcy, everything that concerns electric lighting, everything that concerns our fisheries, the whole department of labour, everything that concerns the commerce of the nation, and the commercial organisations of the country, and, last of all, the work of keeping an eye on the whole business of Private Bill legislation except that which falls to the Local Government Board. I think, therefore, it may fairly be said that the Department in point of the quantity of work and the importance of work, is quite on a level with the other principal Departments of the State. I might illustrate the growth of the Department by mentioning to the Committee that it has now spread from its original building into three or four or five other buildings; and therefore so far as the quantity of the work goes, so far as the nature of the work goes, so far as the importance of the work goes, the commercial interests in the country are every year becoming more important, and are to a large extent the foundation of our foreign policy. In all these respects the Department may fairly claim to be placed upon a level with the other Departments.

*SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) pointed out to the Committee that it would be impossible to consider this matter without considering at the same time the re-arrangement of work between the Government offices. The work of the Board of Trade was absolutely mixed up with that of the Foreign Office as regarded treaties and tariffs, and it was also mixed up with the Home Office as regarded its Labour Department. In fact there was absolute clashing between the Board of Trade and the Home Office; indeed, a certain amount of work was done twice over. As regarded inspection, the Board of Trade was also mixed up with the Home Office. The matter could not be satisfactorily dealt with without considering the question of the redistribution of work between the various Government Offices as a whole. To increase the salary of the President of the Board

of Trade without touching the larger question would be a most imperfect treatment.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I agree to a certain extent with the right honourable Baronet who has just sat down, that possibly a survey of the whole of the multifarious work of the administrative Departments, and a redistribution of that work would be advisable. But when we are dealing with so complex a society as that for which the Government of this country is responsible, it is quite impossible to draw a sharp line of distinction between the work of the Departments. It is inevitable that the Foreign Office should have something to say about commerce, and it is impossible for the Colonial Office to carry on its work wholly distinct from the Foreign Office, and I do not see why the Board of Trade and the Home Office should not have a certain doubtful and nebulous margin where their spheres of labour are conterminous.

Sir, my honourable Friend who sits behind me (Sir Stafford Northcote) and the right honourable Gentleman opposite (Mr. Bryce) have, I think, in no sense exaggerated the growth of the work of the Board of Trade in the last generation. The growth goes on with increasing celerity and shows no sign of diminution. But this is true not of the Board of Trade alone, but almost as much—I should be inclined to say quite as much—of the Local Government Board and other Departments, whose work has been increased not so much by Statute as by the increased business of the world and the increased intercourse between different nations. Take, for example, the Foreign Office, and draw up a list of the dispatches it receives from day to day and compare it with the number received in the times, say, of Lord Palmerston, and honourable Members would, I think, be astonished at the growth, and feel what enormous labour it throws on the shoulders of the Minister responsible. If that is true of the Foreign Office it is no less true of the Colonial Office; and if it is true of the Colonial Office it certainly is no less true of the Irish Office. I believe there was a time when the Irish Secretary was considered to occupy a post of considerable emolument and leisure. That,

I imagine, is not the view taken either by its present occupant, or by any of those on either side of politics who have held it of recent years. But the growth of the work of the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office, and the Irish Office is not so much due to the increased statutory duties thrown on them, but the work of the Board of Trade and the Local Government Board has been very largely increased by statutory enactments. I do not suppose a Session passes but what additional responsibilities are thrown on these two offices, involving additional labour to their heads and the staff, and the inevitable and consequent necessity for, from time to time, largely increasing those staffs. Under those circumstances I think my honourable Friend is not wrong in urging that if we had a blank sheet to deal with, and if we were not, as it were, trammelled by the history of the various Government Departments, and if we had to arrange the salaries of Ministers in proportion to their labour, there would not be the difference there is at present between, for instance, the Local Government Board and the Board of Trade and the older offices in the State, and I think it quite possible that the time may not be very far distant when the whole Question will be reconsidered. It is evident that the position of the President of the Board of Trade cannot be dealt with in an isolated way, and that there must be a general survey of the whole work of the Government Departments, and a general and uniform plan adopted in their treatment. My honourable Friend seemed to suppose that the opinions Members of the Cabinet express to each other are valued in proportion to the salary of the Gentleman who utters them. I can assure him that this is not the case; but, as in all other assemblies of persons, of course on equality, the weight of individual opinion depends on the individual, and not on any extraneous or fortuitous circumstances.

SIR S. NORTHCOTE said he did not mean for a moment to suggest that his colleagues in the Cabinet would not treat the President of the Board of Trade with respect, regardless of his salary. He only meant that the public, rightly or wrongly, might think he had not the same weight.

First Lord of the Treasury.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The public, then, are wholly mistaken, as they are about many other subjects connected with the Cabinet. But I need not dwell upon that point; after all, it is not the main point. On the general Question I quite recognise that the growth of the great offices which have been referred to has produced a certain anomaly in our present system, and at no distant period that anomaly may be considered and, if possible, corrected.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I think the Committee generally will feel that the honourable Baronet opposite was well justified in bringing forward this matter, especially in the quiet and temperate way in which he has done so. He suggested, I think, the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the matter, but I hardly think myself that that would be, at this stage at all events, the proper and most convenient course to take. It would be rather a matter for the Government themselves to inquire into and take, as the right honourable Gentleman has said, a survey of the whole distribution of duties between the different Departments, and consider whether in any respect some of the most important of those Departments, at the present moment at all events, do not appear to be placed at some disadvantage as compared with others. I do not know if any levelling is to take place, what particular course that levelling process would follow. There is a process which is called levelling up, and there is another which is called levelling down—that is a chapter I shall not open or look into. But I do think there is a certain truth—whether a sentimental or material truth really does not very much matter—in the allegation that one or two of these great Departments have the appearance, judged by the ordinary standards of dignity and importance, of being inferior to the others. The preponderate feeling of the Committee being in favour of an examination of the whole question, I think it would be well if the right honourable Gentleman and his colleagues would consider, during such leisure as they can find, the question which has been raised. The honourable Baronet who has raised the subject no doubt represents considerable feeling outside the House.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (King's Lynn) said he hoped the right honourable Gentlemen on both sides of the House who had taken part in the discussion would not think that the Committee welcomed this amicable and friendly, if not preconcerted, suggestion. It had been suggested that in some quarters a Minister was estimated by the salary he received. He did not think any such conclusion was formed by anybody either in the House or the country. The work of the Board of Trade had undoubtedly accumulated. It dabbled in shipping and bankruptcy, ran a newspaper, and spent its time suspending captains' certificates. But he was not impressed by the success which had attended its work, and he certainly could not say of it, *nihil tetigit quod non ornavit*.

Motion made, and Question put—

“That Item A (Salaries), be reduced by £100, in respect of the Salary of the President of the Board of Trade.—(Mr. Maddison.)

MR. MADDISON, in moving the reduction of the salary of the President of the Board of Trade by £100, said he desired to refer to matters connected with railway safety, which he thought the right honourable Gentleman in his administrative capacity had not dealt with in a way that would commend itself to the Committee. The question of the safety of railway men was one of considerable importance. There were engaged in the manipulation of the railway traffic, quite apart from clerks, mechanics engaged in shops, and other railway employees, 220,000 men. The general average was about 500 killed and over 4,000 injured each year. These were very large figures, and he was quite certain they were sufficient to warrant honourable Members paying close attention to the causes which resulted in that terrible casualty list. In 10 years there were 4,751 men killed and 30,271 injured, making the terrible number of accidents, fatal and non-fatal, in the last 10 recorded years no less than 35,022. Worked out in percentages, and deducting those not engaged in railway traffic, they found that one man was killed in every 621 employed in 1897, and one in 69 injured. Figures such as these deserved very careful attention, and imposed on the President of the Board of Trade the continuous obligation to make

every endeavour to reduce them. In shunting, a more dangerous form of railway work, according to the return which the right honourable Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade granted him last year, there were no fewer than 18,291 accidents in 10 years, and the percentage in 1897 was one man killed in every 203, and one in 12 injured. Honourable Members had said that there had been a gross exaggeration of the number of casualties with respect to shunting. They admitted the truth of the figures quoted with respect to shunting as a whole, but so far as uncoupling and coupling vehicles was concerned, argued that there were only 19 men killed in 1897. Railway directors appeared to regard 19 shunters killed as something so small as not to make it worth while to mention it at all. But in compiling the Board of Trade Returns, which were given by the railway companies unchecked by the President or his Department, he had to depend entirely, not only upon the general total of accidents given to him by the company, but as to the category in which those accidents were placed; and when the Committee remembered that the agitation for automatic couplings was not a few months old, as some honourable Gentlemen seemed to imagine, but that it was a very old agitation, and that the principle at stake was once embodied in a Bill which received a Second Reading in the House. He thought, without being uncharitable to the railway companies, it was only fair to them to state that there was not a single accident placed under the head of coupling or uncoupling which did not strictly belong to it. In addition to that there was an item in the same table of “falling between vehicles.” Now, he had no means to ascertain from what quarter those accidents came, but there was a strong suspicion that some of them might fairly be placed under the head of coupling and uncoupling; but, of course, he must take the only material at his disposal, viz., the statistics of the Board of Trade. And what did he find? For the last 10 recorded years there were 3,524 accidents amongst a total of 18,000 employed in the grades of goods guards, brakemen, and shunters. Honourable Gentlemen opposite and their friends in the country said that there was no need

for the suggestion for automatic couplings, because there was an appliance in use, called the shunting-pole, which obviated the necessity for going between vehicles, and thus removed the danger. The returns did not support this statement, the figures for the five recorded years showing an increase of 23 per cent. in the number of accidents over those in the previous five years, though the shunting pole was in operation. The shunting pole had been used very widely by some of the goods-carrying railways, the North-Eastern especially, which was one of the heaviest mineral-carrying railways and one of the heaviest of goods lines generally; and it had been in increasing use on the various lines of the kingdom. Yet the fact remained that there had been this large increase in the number of accidents. The shunting pole was the outcome of a similar agitation which was denounced up and down the country as being merely intended to harass capital. The man was a fool who wanted to harass capital; they wanted to develop it. Last Session the President of the Board of Trade promptly granted a Return on the subject of the accidents. But the right honourable Gentleman was not content with that alone. His mind was considerably disturbed about the accidents, and at the end of the year, with a commendable desire to reduce the number, he sent Mr. Hopwood, the head of the Railway Department of the Board of Trade, to inquire into the system of coupling in America, where the automatic coupler and other appliances had been in use for a long time. And what did he find? He found that in 1897 there were 219 less men killed and 4,994 less men injured in the work of coupling and uncoupling cars than in 1893. If that great reduction in the loss of life and limb had been brought about by one improved appliance, was there not reason to think that similar results would have followed its introduction in this country? He admitted that the method of tabulating statistics was not quite the same in the two countries, but there could be no getting away from the broad fact that the number of men killed before the introduction of the automatic coupler and afterwards showed that a reduction had taken place under the most unfavourable circumstances, because there was only 70 per

cent. of the stock fitted with these automatic couplers. This meant that men had had to handle stock sometimes with the automatic coupler and sometimes with the old-fashioned hand method. Honourable Members would, therefore, see that there was some danger of the men getting confused in the two methods and so falling victims to accidents. The reduction of 50 per cent. in the number of accidents, therefore, by no means indicated the full value of the automatic coupler. Mr. Hopwood concluded his Report with a very judicious reference to the experience of his Department as to block-working, the inter-locking of points, signals, and the use of continuous brakes, remarking that the Regulation of Railways Act of 1889 afforded a precedent to follow with respect to further improvements in railway safety.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I must ask the honourable Member how he connects the Board of Trade with this matter? What power has the Board of Trade to insist on railway companies using automatic couplers?

MR. MADDISON: I connect the Board of Trade with railway safety generally. I am merely pointing out that there is great loss of life on railways, and I suggest that automatic couplings and other things would reduce it.

THE CHAIRMAN: What power has the Board of Trade to insist on the railway companies using automatic couplings?

MR. MADDISON: They have the method of issuing circulars, and a Bill has been introduced on the subject, but that, of course, I must not refer to.

MR. McKENNA (Monmouth, N.) observed that on the point of order the President of the Board of Trade had recently received a deputation on the specific point of the safety to be obtained by the use of automatic couplings, and thereby rendered the subject in order on this Vote.

MR. BRYCE: On the point of order I would point out that the right honourable Gentleman lately announced that a Royal Commission was to be appointed to deal with this question.

Mr. Maddison.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the honourable Member is entitled to criticise the action of the President of the Board of Trade in having referred this matter to a Royal Commission.

MR. MADDISON said that was his point, but he had perhaps travelled wide of it. He thought he should be in order in discussing the question of railway safety by referring to the deputation received by the President of the Board of Trade from the Mining Association of Great Britain; and the right honourable Gentleman had also met a deputation of private waggon-owners. And what did he find? The waggon-owners' deputation had transformed the whole situation, and now it was found that not only the question of automatic couplings, but the labelling of waggons on both sides and the working of hand-brakes from each side had been referred to a Royal Commission. He had proved that automatic couplings had been sufficiently defended to warrant legislation being introduced, and the other reforms were declared by the right honourable Gentleman to be non-contentious. But what was the effect of the appointment of a Royal Commission? It was an obstacle to the application of all the ordinary methods which the right honourable Gentleman might supply. There would be one answer during the life of the present Parliament to any honourable Gentleman who appealed to the President of the Board of Trade, and that was, that it was impossible for him to interfere, because a Royal Commission was considering the subject, and the Report must be awaited before action could be taken. In his opinion, the right honourable Gentleman had allowed a financially-interested opposition to influence, to control, and, finally, to compel him to surrender.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he wished to bring before the Committee an instance of great oppression on the part of the Board of Trade, not so much on account of the instance itself, as because it seemed to be typical of a persistent misapprehension by the Board of Trade of the purpose for which a certain very unusual power was given to it, and an instance also of the cruel manner in which that power was abused; and inasmuch as there was no Board of

Trade, except the President himself, he was forced to move the reduction of his salary. On the 29th March last there was brought before the two local justices at Liverpool a dispute between Captain Beveridge of the barque "J. V. Troop," and one of his crew named Youl. The vessel had gone a deep-sea round voyage from the United States to Australia, thence to Hong-Kong, and thence to Liverpool, and on arrival at Liverpool Captain Beveridge summoned Youl for an assault, alleging that while at sea, in the course of the voyage, he found Youl whistling, and he spoke to him on the subject. Youl thereupon went for him with a knife, upon which Captain Beveridge struck him with a belaying-pin and put him in irons. Youl, on the other hand, declared that he was only whistling, that he was struck many times by the captain, and that he did not think he had a knife in his hands. According to the newspaper reports, the evidence was of a very contradictory character, but after hearing it the magistrates decided in favour of the seaman and against the captain, and fined the latter £5. His complaint was of the subsequent action of the Board of Trade, which he thought was oppressive. On the same day a letter was written to the Board of Trade by a Mr. Neale, solicitor to the Seamen and Firemen's Union.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough) said it was absolutely incorrect to say that Mr. Neale was acting for the Union in any way.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he did not make himself responsible for the statement. Mr. Neale, at any rate, wrote to the Board of Trade calling its attention to the case, and three weeks afterwards Mr. Neale received from the Board of Trade this letter:—

"Board of Trade,
"April 20, 1899.

"Sir,—With reference to your letter of the 29th ult., relating to the conviction of Mr. E. R. Beveridge, master of the ship 'J. V. Troop,' for an assault on J. C. Youl, one of the crew, I am directed by the Board of Trade to inform you that in pursuance of the power conferred upon them by section 469 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, they have suspended Mr. Beveridge's certificate as master for three months."

Now, he assumed, although the evidence was contradictory, that this offence was committed. But he also assumed, as as he was equally bound to assume, that the penalty inflicted by the court after hearing the evidence was an adequate penalty. Furthermore, he fully admitted that the Board of Trade had power in section 469 to suspend or cancel the captain's certificate. He said "had power," but he also said it was under no obligation. The President, indeed, seemed the previous day to suggest by his answer that the Board was bound either to suspend or cancel the certificate. That he entirely denied. The word of the section was that the Board of Trade "may" suspend or cancel the certificate—not that it "shall," or that it "must," and the word "may" was used because it clearly pointed to the exercise of a discretion by the Board of Trade, and because, undoubtedly, if discretion were used the section gave to the Board a valuable reserve power. If, for instance, it were shown in the course of a conviction that the captain, the mate, or the engineer were guilty of habitual drunkenness, were afflicted with some latent form of insanity, or showed gross carelessness or incapacity, then undoubtedly the Board of Trade, after due examination, would be wholly justified in exercising the power given to it by this section. But if such were shown, then undoubtedly the proper course would be, on finding the officer unfit, to cancel his certificate because of his unfitness. In this case, however, the Board of Trade clearly did not hold him to be unfit for the position to command, for it did not cancel his certificate, but only suspended it for three months, and then left him free to return to his command. And, here, in passing, he might say that it must be quite manifest that in the exercise of the power given to it by this section, it was never right to suspend a certificate as a second punishment. It could only be right to cancel the certificate, because the man had been shown to be unfit to hold it.

Mr. Gibson Bowles.

That was not his view alone—that was the view of the Royal Commission which reported on the 1st July 1874. They said—

"We are of the opinion that the present system under which the certificate of a master or other officer is suspended, very frequently only for an error of judgment, should be entirely discontinued, and that neither the Court of Inquiry nor the Board of Trade should have the power of dealing with the certificate. We think that the certificate of the officer should never be suspended, but that in cases to be provided for by express enactment, the tribunal before which the officer is tried"—

Mark, not the Board of Trade, but the tribunal—

"should have the power of cancelling either all his certificate or, at its discretion, his higher certificates,"

But meantime, this judicious recommendation not having been adopted, the Board of Trade had the power which the Committee thought it should not have. Now, how did it exercise that power? Beveridge was found guilty, as he had said, of the offence. He was adequately punished. So far as he could ascertain, it was the letter of Mr. Neale that first moved the Board of Trade. What was in the letter they did not know, for the Board of Trade refused to give it. Whether there were any other letters they did not know, for the Board would give no information. Whether in addition to this and probably other letters there were any interviews at the Board of Trade they did not know. What they did know was that there were neither letters nor interviews with Beveridge, the accused man. What they did know was that, without writing a line to Beveridge, the Board wrote to Mr. Neale on the 20th April and intimated its decision to him. Now, what had the Board of Trade to consider? It had to consider whether this man, who had been guilty of the offence and had been adequately punished for it, should be by the Board of Trade punished a second time. What, under those circumstances, would be the conduct of any fair-minded man or Department? Why,

undoubtedly, to tell the accused man that there was a possibility of another and more serious penalty being inflicted upon him, to call upon him to state if he had anything to say, to hear him in his own defence; to hear, at any rate, his reason, if he could give any, why the second sentence should not be passed upon him. That was what anybody with any power of inflicting a second punishment should do, and does, except the Board of Trade. That was that the Admiralty did when a naval officer was convicted of an offence of which the Admiralty deemed it right to take cognizance. It never inflicted a professional penalty on him in addition to that already inflicted without calling upon him to make a statement in his own defence. That was what the Medical Council did when any doctor or surgeon had been convicted of any offence before removing him from the register, or depriving him of his licence to practise. It heard what the man had to say. That was also what the Bar did. That was also what the attorneys did before they took each other off the rolls. It was what everybody always did, and always had done, except only the Spanish Inquisition, the Venetian Council of Ten, and the British Board of Trade. Let the Committee remember that the Board of Trade knew none of the details of this case. The President avowed that he had no reports, whether official or otherwise. He did, indeed, say that the assault was a brutal one, but the fact that in the same breath he avowed he had no report of the case proved that this word "brutal" was a mere importation of his own into the case—he would not say with the intention, but certainly having the effect, of prejudicing it in the eyes of the House. An explanation or a defence of Captain Beveridge might possibly have put an entirely different colour upon the matter, but not one word was asked of him or even allowed to be said by him. He was not even made acquainted with the fact that he was being put a second time on his trial. The first intimation he had of it was the peremptory demand for his certi-

ficate. Yet the Board of Trade was not incapable of correspondence. It could correspond with Neale, it could hear one side, it could accept an *ex parte* statement, but it was too high and mighty, forsooth, to send a word to Beveridge or to call upon him for a statement of that other side which, like the Scotch judge, it thought might only confuse it. In order to realise the view of the Board of Trade of this and similar cases, attention must be given to the replies of the President of that Board to the questions he addressed to him the day before. The House would remember that, with lofty though courteous scorn, the right honourable Gentleman dismissed all idea of hearing the accused or of weighing evidence, and refused all reasons for the action that the Board had taken. This was worse even than Jedburgh justice, for under that system if a man was hanged first he was tried afterwards, but the President of the Board of Trade refused to try him either before or afterwards. Well, this unfortunate man Beveridge, being deprived thus of his means of livelihood, and having affixed upon him this stigma, had been driven to leave the country. In the "Liverpool Journal of Commerce," of 26th April, he found a letter from him in which he said—

"I write a few lines to you in haste, as in consequence of the suspension of my certificate I am leaving the country to-day for the United States, where I intend in future to make my home. I laboured and served for my certificate and, acquired it honourably, and have served my employers faithfully and honestly for 12 years giving them satisfaction, and endeavouring to do my duty to all those who were under me as well as those who were over me. I have not time to dilate upon the difficulties that shipmasters have with their crews now at sea; suffice it to say that it exceeds all their other worries and perplexities. My conscience is clear. I have done nothing to forfeit the confidence of my employers, nor to disgrace the honour of the profession, and I feel that the Board of Trade have dealt most unjustly in suspending my certificate, which, however, I will endeavour to do without."

To him that was rather a touching letter. He believed that Beveridge was not naturally a bad man, but had simply lost his temper, and had used unnecessary

violence.. He thought it fair and right to read a spontaneous testimony to his character from his employers—

"For several years past we have known Captain E. R. Beveridge, first as master of the barque 'St. Julien,' and then when in command of the barque 'J. V. Troop,' and have always considered him a highly respectable, reliable, and capable shipmaster. In a recent letter from the owners they say that Captain Beveridge is a man of whom we have always had a very high opinion, and he had given every satisfaction."

That was the character that the man had held for 18 years. He trusted his motives would not be misunderstood in bringing the case before the House. He believed there was no man who yielded a greater sympathy or a stronger affection to the British sailor than he did. He knew him, and had been shipmates with him; he had some defects, but some splendid qualities. He was often cruelly handled; he had to endure bad food, bad pay, and bad treatment, though rarely in British ships, where food, pay, and treatment are better than in any others in the world. He was also aware that crews were sometimes extremely difficult to manage so as to secure the doing of the necessary ship's work, and the safety of the ship herself. One sea lawyer, one perverse agitator in the forecabin of a ship would spoil a whole crew, and make it almost impossible to get the ship's work done and discipline maintained unless by the use of violence. There might be faults on one side or the other. There might be faults on both sides. Undoubtedly, disputes would constantly occur. All he asked and claimed was that so far as the Board of Trade was concerned, the circumstances should be weighed fairly and justice done. Now, then, to summarise—he would say to the Board of Trade, Your Star Chamber sentence on Captain Beveridge is too self-confessed to be either inadequate or unjust. If his conviction showed that he was an improper person to command a ship, it was inadequate, because you only suspended his certificate for three months, and then left him to resume command. If, on the other hand, his conduct did not show that he was an improper person to command, the penalty already inflicted was adequate, and you had no ground for preventing him from commanding for a single day, and your sentence was, therefore, unjust. But just or unjust, you

Mr. Gibson Bowles.

inflicted it without hearing any defence. In this case, as in that celebrated case on the other side of the water—the Dreyfus case—the important question was not so much the guilt of the accused as the nature of the quantity of the trial by which he was condemned. Here, as in the Dreyfus case, there was no publicity or report of the proceedings. Nay, one might almost say there were no proceedings except the stroke of the pen of a Board of Trade clerk in a back parlour of Whitehall. Here, as in the Dreyfus case, they had no incriminating documents they could produce, nor any documents at all, unless, indeed, Neale's letter was to play the part of that bordereau of which they had heard so much. Here there was not even the appearance of the accused before the Star Chamber Court. There was not even an intimation to him that he was being put upon his second trial. There was no request to him to state, if he could in any way, why sentence should not be passed upon him—the sentence of the second punishment of the same offence for which he had already been punished. It was not, he repeated, as to this case alone that he felt strongly; it was because this case represented a most vicious and dangerous system. The President of the Board of Trade hardly rose to the conception of the power or of its appropriate use that this section confers upon him. It was judicial power, if it was exercised with fairness, and after due hearing, it was a power which might work for good, although still dangerous in the hands of such a department as the Board of Trade. But if exercised as it was, secretly, without the control of publicity, without evidence, without the accused, without reply, or explanation, it was not a beneficial exercise of a judicial power, but it was a form of tyranny belonging, perhaps, to the inquisition of Spain, but hitherto as much unknown to us as it was odious to British principles and British history.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said that the honourable Gentleman had been grossly imposed upon on this occasion, and he would give the other side of the story. He wished the honourable Gentleman to understand that the Seamen's Union had had no connection with the prosecution in this case in any form, and that the solicitor named did not act

for the Union. This captain was what was called a Nova Scotia captain. The vessel did not belong to the United Kingdom, but to Nova Scotia; it was one of a fleet of 12 or 13 vessels which belonged to a company there, and he ventured to say that the Board of Trade had more complaints in regard to the captains of that fleet than against the captains of all the other vessels in the United Kingdom put together. Only a month or two ago another captain in the same fleet was charged before the assizes in Liverpool with the murder of a Chinese boy, the steward of the vessel. And in July last year, another captain belonging to the same firm was summoned at the Swansea police court for brutally ill-using and assaulting the crew of his vessel. It had been the common practice of the captains of these vessels for years past to drive the men out of the ships at every port, in order that they might not get their wages.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: That is very strong.

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON: It is strong, but perfectly true; and the honourable Gentleman could get information to back up his statement from the Board of Trade. There had been numerous complaints in regard to the brutal conduct by these captains, and the ships were known as perfect hells afloat. No seaman had been known to make a second voyage in these ships on account of the brutal conduct to which they were subjected. Those captains got employment, in fact, with this particular firm because they were bullies and blackguards, yet the honourable Gentleman came down to the House with a soft story about this poor unfortunate captain in the Liverpool police court, all because the Board of Trade had done its duty. What would have happened if any seaman had been charged with assault on a captain? He would have been sent to prison without the option of a fine, and that was where the captain ought to have gone if justice had been done in the case. He sometimes differed from the Board of Trade, but he ventured to say on this occasion he was in hearty accord with their action. If a captain was not able to maintain discipline without using violence, he was not fit to command a ship. His regret was that the Board of Trade did not

take away the captain's certificate altogether, instead of merely suspending it for three months. He had been informed that in some of those ships they carried prize fighters as second officers and boat-swains, who used belaying pins on the crew daily. That was not the kind of firm which the honourable Gentleman ought to champion in this House.

Mr. SEELY (Lincoln) said he would like to bring the attention of the Committee back to the question raised by the honourable Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield. As a colliery and wagon owner, he would like to refer to a speech of the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Stirling Burghs, who said that the employers of labour in their action with regard to the Government Bill on automatic couplings were influenced by carelessness for the safety of their men. He was not concerned to defend the Government against the attacks of the right honourable Gentleman, but as an employer of labour sitting in the House he did protest against the implication of the right honourable Gentleman that employers of labour and wagon owners, in any action they took in regard to coupling wagons, were influenced by carelessness of the lives of their workmen. He thought that on reflection the right honourable Gentleman would be sorry for the speech he had made, and for the implication which might attach to it. There was no doubt that Government Departments had by their action conduced to a certain extent to the safety of the workingmen in the country, but he held that for one man's life saved by the action of Government Departments, 50 men's lives would be saved by the general improvement introduced for the safety and security of their workmen by the thought and care of employers and their engineers. He would like to make a suggestion to the President of the Board of Trade in regard to wagons generally in this country. He could not agree with the honourable Member for Brightside Division of Sheffield as to the value of the evidence being conclusive in favour of automatic couplings. He quite understood the risks connected with the coupling and uncoupling of wagons, and no one was more anxious than he was to diminish these risks. The principle evidence as to the advantage of automa-

tic couplings had been taken from a report of what had been done in America. He did not think that anyone who knew America would be very much impressed with the methods of railway working there in regard to security. He did not deny the humanity of the Americans, but owing partly to the extent of the country, and partly to the desirability of rapid communication, greater importance was attached to rapid communication than to the individual safety of men. The long Civil War had made them also rather more careless of human suffering than those more fortunately placed at the present time. He could not himself attach very much importance to American opinion against that of those who were connected with railway management in this country. He had not himself seen automatic couplings in actual work in America, except 17 or 18 years ago, and then these were only attached to passenger carriages, and not to wagons. He had looked into what had happened in colliery sidings in the Midland district with which he was acquainted. There 20 million tons of coal were handled, and last year there was no fatal accident caused by the coupling or uncoupling of the wagons. And taking the whole of the colliery sidings throughout England, while there were 69 accidents connected with railway wagons, only four men were connected with coupling and uncoupling. He could not help thinking that though automatic couplings might be of use in preventing accidents in coupling passenger coaches, in colliery sidings their use would have a tendency to increase general accidents, as from the nature of the case they would be worked at greater speed than the present coupling arrangements. Therefore, very careful consideration ought to be made before the Government insisted on the adoption of automatic couplings. He thought that the proposal of the President of the Board of Trade to appoint a Royal Commission on the whole subject was admirable, and he hoped that the result would be the discovery of a good automatic coupling. A great deal had been said on this question, and it appeared to be the impression that these wagons were owned mostly by large owners and railway companies. It was not realised that a considerable number of wagons were

owned by small people who could not raise money for the purpose of making any large alteration. The President of the Board of Trade should make regulations for securing that the rolling stock was brought up to a certain standard, and the best thing the right honourable Gentleman could do to secure that end was to require the railway companies to purchase the rolling stock at a fair valuation, and then there would be great advantages in making these regulations not only from the point of view of the shunters, but also for the safety of the public. He would add his voice to what had been said by the Member for Brightside about labelling the wagons on both sides, for there was no reason why this should not be done. It would cost a small amount of money, and the present difficulty was that one tradesman could not make the alteration without the others did the same thing, because competition was so keen. He did not think the President of the Board of Trade could have very much knowledge on the subject or he would never have said that it would take two years to carry this labelling into operation, because it could be done in two weeks. He hoped the Royal Commission would be attended with good results in securing greater safety for the shunters in this country.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.) did not think that anyone would question the justice of what the honourable Member had said, because they were more anxious about the safety of workmen's lives than they used to be years ago, and he thought he was entitled to say that legislation had exercised a very quickening effect upon employers of labour in this respect. He thought the honourable Member who had just sat down at the close of his speech showed a little of the cloven hoof of which they complained. He had stated in reference to labelling that they should take care that injury was not imposed upon employers in reference to the expense. He did not quarrel with the honourable Member for having regard to the lucrative carrying on of his business, but when he reflected upon the number of accidents which annually occurred through the present disgraceful system of shunting, all that he could say was that the

expenditure involved would certainly be the last element which he would consider. What had been the result and the experience in America? Before the introduction of automatic couplings there the loss of life was appalling, and in one year alone there were no less than 369 persons killed from shunting operations. Mr. Moseley's Report showed that in 1897, since the partial introduction of automatic couplings, the number of fatal shunting accidents had decreased by no less than 219.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I think the honourable Gentleman is getting a long way from the only point which is really open for discussion, which is the appointment of a Royal Commission.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES said it appeared to him that the loss of life was germane to the appointment of a Royal Commission. He could imagine, as had been pointed out, that there was a difference between the rolling stock of this country and that of America, and he could understand that there was a difficulty in finding a standard automatic coupling.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I must invite the honourable Gentleman to come more closely to the subject under discussion.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES said he understood that there was to be a Royal Commission appointed to decide what was the best form of coupling to be used.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: It is not proposed to simply ask the Royal Commission to decide only what is the best standard of automatic coupling, and the honourable Member must not assume that.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES asked what on earth was the Commission for? He understood that until it was decided what standard of automatic coupling should be adopted that it would be objectionable for the railway companies to have automatic coupling. In response to the representations of the railway companies the right honourable Gentleman had proposed a Royal Com-

mission, and unless it was for the purpose of meeting the point raised it would be interesting to learn what was the ground upon which the appointment of this Commission was necessary. In the year 1897 there were 97 shunters killed and 2,400 injured, and many of these injuries, although not fatal, had resulted in permanent disablement. In the face of these appalling figures, and of the example which had been set by America, the right honourable Gentleman had taken upon himself a very serious responsibility in shelving this question and dealing with it by a Commission. It was not too late for the right honourable Gentleman to respond to the appeal which had been so eloquently made.

MR. D. H. COGHILL said he was authorised to oppose the Bill dealing with the subject on behalf of the railwaymen connected with the North Staffordshire Railway. Wherever working men had had an opportunity of using the automatic couplings they had been condemned by them. He reminded the Committee that the whole conditions of the railway system in England were totally different to those on the American system. In America they had long-distance runs, extending sometimes over a thousand miles, but in this country it was quite a different matter, the trains running short distances and wagons having to be added at frequent intervals. He had been told that American couplings would not work well on English railways with their many curves. The honourable Member read an extract from the "Railway Herald" referring to the automatic couplings used in connection with some of Messrs. Barnum and Bailey's carriages on the North Staffordshire Railway, and pointing out that on the curves it was most difficult to get them to act. One man was reported to have said that he would rather deal with 40 trains on the English principle than with one on the American. He was very glad indeed that the right honourable Gentleman was now going to have a Commission before pressing the Bill. He only hoped that the result of the inquiry would be that a good coupling would be found. There was a large number of English patents as well as American, and he hoped there would be a coupling found which would answer all the conditions of the English rail-

ways, which were totally different to the American system. As far as returns went in reference to the number killed on the railway, there appeared to be 19 deaths in this country to every 63 in America. If we wanted to have fewer accidents on our railways had not we better keep to a system which gave a smaller number of accidents rather than embark on another theory which had resulted in a much larger loss of life? Nineteen lives were far too many to lose, but he must remind the honourable Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield that 63 was a much higher rate. He thought that more attention should be paid to official figures if they were to decide the question. They were altogether in favour of the English system. He hoped the Committee would pause before they did anything which would throw any doubt upon the wisdom of the proposal of the President of the Board of Trade.

LORD E. FITZMAURICE (Wilts., Cricklade) said they did not like to discuss a question of this nature in Committee, because they were probably desirous of speaking on certain points which had been ruled out of order. The discussion had been confined in such narrow limits that it made a full consideration of the question impossible, and in that respect it was unsatisfactory. In the great railway centre of Swindon no question of late years had excited so much interest among the railway employees. Although there was a very great deal of regret in regard to the postponement of legislation dealing with automatic couplings, they felt that the labelling of wagons was a simple matter and they did not see why it should not be dealt with at once. He did not desire to labour these points, but he had risen to impress upon his right honourable Friend the very great desire which existed amongst railway employees that this question should be dealt with and settled as quickly as possible, and he hoped before this discussion terminated that the right honourable Gentleman would be able to give the Committee fuller information as to the appointment of this Commission, and how long he thought its inquiries would take.

Mr. Coghill.

MR. F. H. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) drew the attention of the President of the Board of Trade to the history of a somewhat similar matter in relation to the working of railways—the adoption of automatic brakes. He said that the necessity for automatic brakes was demonstrated by repeated accidents in this country; that the result of careful inquiries by the Board of Trade had been the issue by that Department of very strong recommendations to the railway companies do adopt automatic brakes. That action was followed by an emphatic circular insisting upon their adoption. It seemed to him unfortunate that this matter had not been forced to a head by legislation. He thought that, instead of sending this matter before a Royal Commission, it would be desirable to draft a circular of an emphatic and decisive character, giving an opportunity to the railway companies to exercise their discretion as to the best type of automatic couplings for the use of the railways of this country. If that circular were followed up with a tolerably clear statement by the Board of Trade of their intention to have recourse to legislation within a short period, he thought that would be the most reasonable way of proceeding with the question. He did not dissent from the idea of an inquiry by Royal Commission, but thought this question might be dealt with more easily by a Departmental Committee, which would be a simpler and more expeditious method of dealing with the problems to be solved. He thought useful results would follow from the inquiry, especially with regard to rolling stock. Anything which would stimulate and hasten the change of the railway rolling stock in this country to the type with which travellers on the Continent and in America were familiar would be, of course, beneficial. The duty of the Department to make every endeavour to minimise the accidents so strongly set before the Committee by the honourable Member for Sheffield was fully recognised, and it was to be regretted that now, just as 10 years ago, a Conservative Minister had yielded

to pressure and relegated to long and desultory inquiry a matter which might be dealt with more promptly. He thought the pressure brought to bear by the railway companies ought to be resisted, and he appealed to the President of the Board of Trade to take some step to hasten the adoption of automatic couplings.

MR. McKENNA said he wished to call the attention of the President of the Board of Trade to the language used by him when he received a deputation of the companies on the 16th March last, when he undertook to consider the introduction of a Bill dealing with the less contentious matters included in the Railway Regulation Bill. The President of the Board of Trade had since abandoned the whole matter, and submitted it to the consideration of a Royal Commission. It was particularly unfortunate when the right honourable Gentleman had committed himself to a certain line of action that he should have yielded to pressure, and withdrawn from a position which he himself knew to be the right one, and one in which he knew he had not only the support of his Department, but the strong support of this House.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) said that his experience was that the desire of the railway companies was not so much to guard the lives of their employees as to earn good dividends. Nothing was ever done to safeguard the lives of their employees until some action was taken by the Board of Trade. He urged the right honourable Gentleman to inquire into the matter by a Departmental Committee, which was far more competent to deal with it than a Royal Commission. If it were referred to the latter he was convinced that nothing would be done for the next 20 years. He earnestly urged the right honourable Gentleman to take some steps to protect the lives of railway employees.

COMMANDER YOUNG (Berks, Wokingham) said from what had been said by the honourable Member for King's Lynn it appeared to him that a captain of a merchantman had been con-

victed by the magistrates of Liverpool of assaulting a boy on his ship, and had been fined £4. He also gathered that the President of the Board of Trade had, without calling for any explanation from the captain, exercised the authority he possessed, and suspended his certificate for three months. He protested against such action on the part of the Board of Trade, because, in the first place, before a man had his certificate suspended he ought to be called upon for an explanation, in which it was possible he might justify his conduct before the Board of Trade. In the second place he objected for the reason that if such a power could be exercised in one Department it could extend to another, such as the Admiralty or the War Office, and he objected very strongly that any naval or military officer, because he had been convicted by a civil court, should be removed from Her Majesty's Service without having an opportunity given to him to justify his conduct before the authorities.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.) said with regard to the point raised by the honourable Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield, that everybody was looking forward to most happy results from the Bill that was to be brought in. He did not understand why the Government, having such a majority, had been afraid to bring that Measure forward. He was afraid that they were on the downward grade, otherwise he could not imagine why they had taken the opportunity of withdrawing the Bill. The investigation by the Royal Commission would cover a far larger number of points than those contained in the Bill, and he could only hope that it would inaugurate much larger concessions than those now asked for.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: My honourable and gallant Friend the Member for King's Lynn finds great fault with the Board of Trade for having dealt with this captain in the way it did, he having been punished for an offence of which he was convicted by a court of summary jurisdiction. Whatever might be said on the merits or demerits of that particular case, it is a question for the Board of Trade to consider. I do not agree with the honourable and gallant Member that in dealing

with this question it is the duty of the Board of Trade to retry the case. The words of the Act are perfectly clear, "The Board of Trade may suspend or cancel." The duty of the Board of Trade is to look into the circumstances of the case, and if the circumstances which led to the conviction are of such a nature either to merit the suspension or cancellation of the certificate, the President of the Board of Trade is to act at once. My honourable and gallant Friend seems to think that the whole of the information which the Board of Trade obtained of this particular case was derived from the reports of the case, but the Board had placed itself in communication with the officers at Liverpool, and it came to the conclusion that the offence was of such a character that, in the interests of seamen, the certificate should be suspended. My honourable Friend thinks we ought to have done one of two things—either have cancelled the certificate or left the matter alone.

MR. T. G. BOWLES: I say that the Board of Trade should have informed the captain of what they were about to do, and have heard what he had to say.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: It was sufficient for the Board of Trade that the man was convicted, and in the interest of seamen generally and of the owners, the Board of Trade were warranted in carrying out the provisions of the Act, and they considered that in suspending the certificate for three months a light sentence had been inflicted. My honourable Friend has spoken of the matter in such a way as to compel me to give information in regard to the offence for which the man's certificate was suspended. The statement of the chairman of the bench of magistrates before whom the case was tried was that Beveridge's cruelty consisted of attacking the seaman with a belaying pin, dragging him into the cabin by his ear, throwing him down, kneeling on his chest, holding him by the throat, beating him about the face, and putting him in irons for hours. No provocation was alleged except careless steering. When the men were asked to put him in irons they declined, stating that they saw no reason for doing so. The evidence was fully borne out by two seamen and the second mate, while the captain's was entirely uncorroborated.

President of the Board of Trade.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University) asked whether the right honourable Gentleman would tell them what was the captain's statement.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: They are not retrying the man; what they have to do is to look at the nature of the evidence, and I will undertake to say there is not a man in the House who thinks that a small fine and the suspension of his certificate for three months is undue punishment for the offence. I am informed that precisely the same consequences would have followed in the Army.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether it was not the fact that the captain alleged that the man went for him with a knife.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: What I have stated is that the captain's evidence is entirely uncorroborated. With regard to the Measure which I have introduced into the House, I do not complain of the tone in which the matter has been discussed. I am perfectly prepared to justify the action I took. As the Committee are aware, the Measure which I introduced was not a part of the Government's original programme for the Session. The subject has been under my consideration for a considerable time, and, as has been stated, I sent to the United States a special envoy, who was in possession of my entire confidence, with a view to finding out how coupling is dealt with there. The report which was made to me was of such a character as to induce me to make proposals to the House of Commons, proposals which are admitted to be of a model character. It is not my desire to impose on those interested any sudden action. I confess I was not prepared for the amount of opposition which my proposals have met with. If a Measure which is not part of the Sessional programme of the Government is brought forward by a Minister at the head of a department, and encounters the kind of opposition which this Measure has met with, it is not possible for that Minister to ask his colleagues to set aside the programme of the Government in its favour. The manner in which the Bill was received showed that it would not have been

possible to carry it through the House without devoting to it a very large portion of the time of the Government, and even if we had been prepared to do that and it had been sent to a Select Committee, it could not have reached the Select Committee in time to receive that complete investigation which would have been insisted on, and so there would not have been time to complete any legislation on the subject during the present Session. There is not absolute hostility on the part of the railway companies and others interested. They say:—"We recognise that this arrangement has been in existence in the United States, but we do not believe it would be suitable for our traffic; if, however, by an inquiry before a competent tribunal you show us that it will have the effect of saving life and that it can be applied to our railways we are perfectly ready to agree to it, and do not care what may be the expense of adopting it." That is not an unreasonable position for those who have large interests at stake to take up. The advantage of a Royal Commission is that they can proceed at once to this investigation, and if they can do that time will not be lost, but gained. The noble Lord, the Member for Cricklade, has asked when the Royal Commission is likely to be appointed and whether it is likely to proceed at once with its investigation. I may tell my noble Friend that after consulting my colleagues quite recently as to the tribunal before which this inquiry should be made, and having received their assent to the inquiry being made by a Royal Commission, I have not lost an hour in setting to work to get the Commission appointed. I have already been in communication with those gentlemen whose names I desire to submit to Her Majesty for appointment on the Commission, and I have received the assent of nearly the whole of them to serve. Before the House separates for the Whitsuntide recess I hope I shall be able to communicate both the names of the commissioners and the reference that will be made to them. Whatever may be the opinion of honourable Members as to the tribunal or as to the course I have pursued, at least the House cannot accuse me of any delay in endeavouring to get this matter before a competent tribunal. I am unable, of course, to express any opinion as to how long the tribunal will last, but I hope the Commission will set

about this matter in a business-like way, and that the report may not be long delayed. The investigation which will be made by the Royal Commission will certainly not be restricted to the limits of the proposals made in the Bill. There are other important matters connected with the prevention of accidents to railway servants which will have to be considered by the Railway Commission, and I am happy to say that the private truck-owners and the railway companies have shown no reluctance whatever to having the whole question investigated by a competent tribunal. Great fault has been found with my action in this matter. I do not regret the action I have taken in the least. I consider that for the Government to have introduced a Bill of this kind has been a large step in the direction desired by those who wish to see this reform carried into effect. If nothing else has been done, the subject dealt with in the Bill has been advanced by many years by the mere introduction of the Bill. Whether I am right or wrong upon that point, I feel satisfied that the investigation that will take place will be one leading to proposals which the Government will have to lay before the House and which, I hope, will have the effect of greatly improving the position of the railway servants and of greatly diminishing their liability to accident. It is not desirable that I should go into the question of the merits or demerits of particular forms of couplings. That will be dealt with by the Commission, and, though I do not imagine that they will recommend any particular form of coupling, I believe they will come to the conclusion that automatic couplings are as superior to the present state of things as the power-loom was to the old hand-loom. Putting aside altogether the question of the saving of life, I cannot conceive that, if there exists something which can be applied to our railways to couple trucks automatically, the present condition of things can possibly remain.

MR. CARSON referred to the case of Captain Beveridge, and asked if it was fair, when they had to go outside the conviction, to act upon statements of other persons which were never submitted to the accused and thereupon proceed to ruin a man who had had considerable service and whose only

employment was the certificate he held from the Board of Trade. This man had been ruined, and he had had to go to America.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: And a good job too.

MR. CARSON: It would probably be a good job if others went there too. The only point he wished to make was that, if it became necessary at all to go behind the conviction and to hold any inquiry, the accused himself ought to be a party to it and ought to be allowed to see what statements were made. It ought not to be in the power of the Board of Trade, upon the hearing of one side only, to ruin a man by suspending his certificate, as was done in this case. For that reason he should support the Motion of his honourable Friend the Member for King's Lynn.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) congratulated the President of the Board of Trade upon his action in this matter. He wished to remind honourable Gentleman opposite that the right honourable Gentleman had not acted upon partial evidence. He had acted upon the report of the chairman of the bench of magistrates.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: It is not upon the report of the chairman of the bench of magistrates that I acted. It is upon other inquiries, but after my honourable Friend brought the case to my notice I communicated with the Court and got the report to which the honourable Member opposite has referred.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he really thought the right honourable Gentleman had not treated them candidly. He certainly conveyed the impression, to the Committee, that his decision was taken upon the report of the chairman of magistrates. [Cries of "No."] Well, he did to him. He hoped the vicious practice which the right honourable Gentleman had adopted, and which was not adopted either by the Admiralty, the legal or the medical profession, or, he believed, by the War Office, of condemning a man unheard, would be discontinued.

Mr. Carson.

MR. BRYCE referred to the question of automatic couplings, and said he regretted the delay that was likely to occur before legislation could be passed. It was very probable that three years, or possibly more, would elapse before the Commission that was to inquire into the matter even reported. That would mean a substantial loss of time, whereas if the President of the Board of Trade had pressed forward the Bill he could have carried it through during the present Session, and he would have received abundant support from that side of the House. Whilst he frankly acknowledged the intelligence, the great ability, and zeal of the managers of the British railways, he considered that the companies remained greatly behind in many matters of railway organisation. An interesting series of letters which appeared in "The Times" in the spring or summer of last year compared the management of the English and American railways, and anyone reading those contributions must have been struck with the numerous points in which the American railways were proved to be far superior to those of this country, where the organisation and mechanical arrangements were better, and the traffic managed upon a more economical and effective system. This result in America was attributable in a large measure to the uniformity which obtained on the railway system, which was secured by having such a body as the Railway Association, by whose decisions the various railway companies were guided. If the different railway companies in this country could form a similar body it would be possible for it to deal with all matters affecting improvements in the railway system, and to bring about that uniformity which was so much desired. But as the companies themselves did not move in this direction it was necessary for Parliament to introduce legislation from time to time. Anyone travelling up to London on one of their great lines starting from the North, would see at every second or third station a goods train, and especially a coal train, shunted in order to let the fast train pass. That was essential in the present state of things. But if the companies could run their goods traffic at a higher rate of speed, as was now being done much more largely in America, they would have much less difficulty in

working their fast traffic than they had at present. The dropping of the Automatic Couplings Bill had, at any rate, served one good purpose. It had called public attention to the enormous powers which vested interests in this country exercised, for the Government, despite its majority of 140, was obliged to haul down its flag because an attack has been made upon it by railway companies and wagon-owners. That, he contended, was the rather regrettable incident of the affair, and while he acquitted the right honourable Gentleman of want of zeal or energy in the matter, he could not sit down without expressing his disappointment that the Government should have proved so pusillanimous, and that a reform so admittedly urgent and desirable should thereby have been delayed for some years.

Mr. J. WILSON (Falkirk Burghs) said the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Aberdeen had spoken as if this were a matter which concerned only the great railway companies. He could, however, assure him that this was not the case. He (Mr. Wilson) represented an association of private wagon-owners in Scotland, and on their behalf he thanked the President of the Board of Trade for having dropped the Bill. If the Measure had been carried, the whole construction of railway wagons and trucks would have had to be altered, but if wagon owners could be assured that automatic couplings would be the means of saving life no expense would have been allowed to stand in the way. During the whole of 1897 there were only 19 accidents in the actual coupling or uncoupling of wagons, and accidents in shunting—which involved many operations besides coupling or uncoupling—would continue to happen even if automatic couplings were adopted. He thought the President of the Board of Trade had the interests of the railway men very much at heart, and he could not help thinking that he had shown a proper spirit. The right honourable Gentleman had brought in the Automatic Couplings Bill somewhat hastily, and without the requisite inquiry. His eyes, however, were opened now, and he found it was absolutely necessary that there should be a careful and cautious investigation before legislation was proposed. He complimented him very highly on the decision he had come to.

Mr. DONKIN (Tynemouth), referring to the case of Captain Beveridge, said there was nothing more dangerous, nothing more provoking to a captain, than to have a careless helmsman. Any one connected with shipping knew that to bring a ship up within two or three points of the wind would be likely to take the masts out of her. He had seen a very good-tempered captain assault a sailor for careless steering and put him into irons. He wished to tell the right honourable Gentleman that to act in the manner and on the evidence only of sailors, and to suspend a captain's certificate, was an extremely dangerous policy, and would act prejudicially. He considered that a fine was quite sufficient without going further, unless they gave the captain a chance of a free and impartial inquiry into his conduct.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 81; Noes, 126.—(Division List No. 118.)

• Original Question again proposed.

SIR J. LENG (Dundee) rose to call the attention of the President of the Board of Trade to the peculiar constitution of the boards having the control of the lighthouses of the country. He was aware that a few days ago a deputation representing the Chamber of Shipping and the Associated Chambers of Commerce waited upon the right honourable Gentleman at the Board of Trade, and expressed to him their dissatisfaction that nothing had been done to redress what they considered a very serious grievance, namely, that the shipowners of the country were not represented on these boards. It was, however, not only the shipowners who took an interest in this matter, but the shipmasters. He knew that there was no complaint to be made under this head with regard to Trinity House Board, which consisted of a certain number of experts, but on the Northern Lights Commission, with the exception of a small number of representatives of municipalities, there was no representation either of shipowners or shipmasters. The various boards of shipping, mercantile marine boards, and chambers of commerce in the country were much disappointed that they were not directly represented on boards dealing with matters of direct interest to them.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: Order, order! I would ask the honourable Member how he connects the Board of Trade with this matter?

SIR J. LENG: By initiating legislation.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: It is open to the honourable Member to do that. The Committee of Supply only deals with administrative matters.

SIR J. LENG: Then I will advert to the question of administration and complain that these boards, over whom the right honourable Gentleman certainly has supervision, do not administer to the satisfaction of the shipowners. Proceeding, he said he could mention a case coming under his own observation with regard to the putting on of the lights and the extinguishing of them.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: Order, order! Is there any sum of money in this Vote in respect of the Northern Lights Commission?

SIR J. LENG: I think there is a Vote.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: Will the honourable Member kindly quote it?

SIR J. LENG: I am not able to for the moment.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: There is no Vote at all.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: If that is so it is not a matter that can be raised on this Vote.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, N.) directed the attention of the right honourable Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade to an important matter that arose on the discussion of the Estimates last year, namely, the question of workmen's trains in the neighbourhood of London. When the matter was brought before the right honourable Gentleman about a year ago he promised that if definite complaints were made to him about the service of these trains he would send those complaints on to the railway companies, and do what he could to improve the service. Complaints were sent in, and the right honourable Gentleman sent them on to

the various railway companies so precipitately that he had launched the persons who had made them into a sea of trouble. He hoped, therefore, the right honourable Gentleman would do what he could to stop the expensive litigation which had ensued, if it were possible to take action of that kind. The railway companies were obdurate in the matter of workmen's trains, but power to deal with the matter lay to a large extent in the hands of the President of the Board of Trade. The railway companies were obliged to make adequate provision in the matter of the trains for the working population, and by Act of Parliament they were entitled to ample compensation for any loss sustained in making such provision. But it was a curious thing that the railway companies never sustained loss in this direction. Some friends of his had been associated together in bringing this matter of workmen's trains before the President of the Board of Trade. Practically speaking, they had taken action against nine companies. He pointed out that the cases might be referred to the Board of Trade, or, if the companies were very obdurate, to the Railway Commissioners. Four of the companies had been brought to book and had made some provision to meet the requirements of those who lived along their lines. But all the other companies refused to yield to the representations which the President of the Board of Trade sent to them. Two trials had recently taken place, one held before Sir Francis Marindin, but the decision had not yet been announced on account of that gentleman's illness. He would be glad if the right honourable Gentleman would inform the Committee the result at which Sir F. Marindin had arrived. One trial had reference to the London, Tilbury, and Barking line, and the other referred to the Metropolitan and District railways, to which companies strong representations had been made for a service at a very early hour to suit printers. He believed the decision in that case had been arrived at, and that it was against the Metropolitan and District Company, but he would like the right honourable Gentleman to give the Committee precise information on the point. A much more important case had been tried against the Great Eastern Railway. The Railway Commissioners announced their decision about a week ago, and it was

of a far-reaching and sweeping character. It covered all the points for which the workmen had been contending. It decided that half fares should be charged, that proper workmen's trains should be run, that there should be sufficient accommodation, and went the length of ordinary special carriages for females. That was the most far-reaching decision ever given under the Act. The difficulty they were in, however, was that the whole procedure had been immensely expensive, and greater than the poorer classes affected could bear alone. He believed that why the railway companies had done so little was because of the expense of the procedure against them. Four cases were still pending—name'y, against the Great Northern, the London and North Western, the Brighton and South Coast, and the Midland Companies. Each of these corporations had no scruple about going to law, and were prepared to go to any expense. He asked the right honourable Gentleman whether he had carefully considered the principles of the decision at which the Railway Commissioners had arrived, and, if they bore on the points in dispute with the other companies, whether he would bring pressure to bear on these companies to yield, and ask them to accept the decision and provide a proper service on their various lines.

MR. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.) said he wanted some information from the right honourable Gentleman on two subjects. First, what progress he had made in regard to grants for piers and harbours. The right honourable Gentleman had told the House that he was prepared to entertain favourably application from any locality for grants for harbours, although he made some reservations as to the conditions which all applications must comply with. It was within his (the honourable Member's) knowledge that applications had been made for grants, and he wanted to know what progress had been made in the matter. The other subject he wished information on was the construction of light railways. He ventured to think that the Act of Parliament dealing with light railways was one of the most satisfactory which this Parliament had passed. Almost all the orders which the Light Railway Commissioners had passed and submitted to the Board of Trade down to the autumn of 1898 had since

been confirmed by the Board of Trade, and were in process of construction. But there were two exceptions, both referring to the county which he had the happiness to represent. Could the right honourable Gentleman inform him what were the causes for this delay? One was for a light railway between Frazerburgh and St. Colms, the order for which was issued on 7th June 1898. The other was a railway to Echt, the order for which was issued 6th January 1898. Neither of these schemes had been confirmed by the Board of Trade. In regard to one of them he had asked the right honourable Gentleman a question on the 21st April, and the reply was to the effect that on 15th August 1898 the Board of Trade had forwarded a copy of the order to the promoters, and asked for revised prints for formal endorsement. He had been in communication with the promoters, who informed him that they were anxious to go forward, but that they could not do so without the assistance of the Treasury. One of the conditions of the Light Railways Act was that before the promoters could obtain Treasury assistance, some existing railway company should be prepared to construct the line. The promoters had obtained the consent of the Great North of Scotland Railway Company if the Treasury would give the grant. The Great North of Scotland were the promoters of the other scheme, the Echt. Possibly the delay was caused by the action, or inaction, of that railway company. He hoped the Board of Trade would endeavour to accelerate the issue of the confirming order, so that the construction of the line might be proceeded with.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR said he had two small points to which he wished to draw the attention of the right honourable the President of the Board of Trade. The first was in connection with a declaration which the right honourable Gentleman had made some weeks ago in reply to a question as to grants-in-aid for piers and harbours. One result of that declaration was the receipt of an application for aid from Auchmithie in his constituency. Would the right honourable Gentleman explain in what further way they must comply to the conditions before grants were made? The people of Auchmithie had fulfilled all the known conditions for the

grant, but by a series of unfortunate events the matter had dragged on for years. He wanted nothing but justice for this deserving case, and he hoped the right honourable Gentleman would confer with the Scottish Fishery Board and the Scottish Office in the matter. His other point was that under the Light Railways Act there was no provision for taxing the costs of those who appeared before the Commissioners. He did not know whether legislation would be necessary to give the Board of Trade that power, but it would be a great public advantage if they could arrive at the total cost of the construction of railways.

MR. BRYCE said he desired to support what had been said by the honourable Member for Islington on the subject of workmen's trains; he ventured to express his belief that they would find themselves driven ultimately to adopt some more complete remedy for the problem than the Railway Commission could apply. The congestion of the traffic on the great lines coming into London was so great that either the companies would be driven to the very heavy expenditure of doubling their lines, or else they would have to adopt the policy which he was sorry had not been adopted long ago of endeavouring, instead of making London bigger, to carry the industries out of the metropolitan area altogether, and let the people live beside their industries. The difficulty of taking people in and out of London was increasing daily. As regarded the observations made by the honourable Member for East Aberdeen, he could confirm what the honourable Member had said. He would like to ask the right honourable Gentleman the President what would happen if a railroad company having obtained the decision of the Light Railways Commissioners in favour of a line they proposed to make, and having secured the withdrawal of other parties who had intended to make the line—what would happen if the railway company allowed the matter to hang over? Clearly the railway company ought to be bound to make the line in a certain time. If it left the line in the air, so to speak, was it the duty of the Board of Trade to step in and ask the Company to proceed with the scheme? He congratulated the right

honourable the President of the Board of Trade upon the great success of the Light Railway scheme, and he would be glad to see it extended, as it must prove a great advantage to agriculture. He was informed that certain defects in the existing law had emerged which were making the procedure costly, and which would prevent light railways being made in some cases where there was a possibility of competition between different companies. He understood there had been cases in which proposals for light railways had been rejected, because it had been held that they would involve competition with existing railway companies. But even if so, the public gain, especially in wayside traffic, would be so great that the promoters ought not to be driven to come to this House for leave to make these railways, but ought to obtain it under the Light Railways Commission. He took the opportunity of repeating once more the question whether the railway companies were going to do anything for the unhappy cyclist. At present the machines were only carried at the risk of the cyclist, and the charge was heavy. He believed he had in this matter the sympathy of his right honourable Friend the First Lord of the Treasury, and that he would feel that cycling as a recreation and a means of communication had become so much extended and useful that it deserved to be encouraged by the railway companies. His belief was that the railway companies were short-sighted in their present policy, and that if they met the demands of cyclists more liberally they would profit in the long run.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: In regard to the observations of the honourable Member for Islington in respect of the working men's trains I am glad that he appreciates the efforts made by the Board of Trade in the matter. I think that he and the association with which he is connected have done good public work in putting their shoulders to the wheel with regard to workmen's trains, and they have obtained concessions which have gone far beyond anything previously conceded. As the honourable Gentleman knows, I sympathise entirely with the view he takes that every effort ought to be made

to provide facilities for the working people of London to get out into pure fresh air, and for going to and from their work at a cheap rate. I do not intend to trouble the Committee with all the details, but I may refer to one or two of the lines to which he has alluded. There has been, as he very properly said, a very important decision by Sir Francis Marindin in regard to the Tilbury line. Although unfortunately I cannot at the moment communicate the full particulars of that decision, I may tell the honourable Gentleman that it is a satisfactory decision from his point of view. In regard to the Metropolitan and District lines Sir Francis reports that there are very great difficulties in the way. He was not able to recommend the proposal to run a train at 3 o'clock in the morning, as these lines must be closed for a few hours during the night for repairs. The honourable Gentleman has referred to the applications before the Railway Commissioners, and has expressed satisfaction in regard to the decision in the case of the Great Eastern Company. It has undoubtedly had, and ought to have, an influence on other companies. The honourable Gentleman asked me to bear in mind the principles of these decisions and to make representation to the railway companies, and I am glad to assent to his request. I shall personally examine carefully the decision, and shall take such steps as I am advised in the hope that such facilities as are desired may be given without further trouble or litigation. The honourable Members for Aberdeen East and for Forfarshire drew attention to my promise this year to see whether I could not meet the wishes of poor localities who cannot themselves make harbours without the help of the Government. In the case mentioned by the honourable Member for East Aberdeenshire, he asks that I should use my influence with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to get it dealt with on similar lines to applications under the Light Railways Act. We have had a great number of applications, some of them I am afraid not within the area of the proposals I made, and I have thought that the best course to adopt was to take the same procedure as in regard to light railways. In conjunction and with the assent of the Treasury I have appointed a small Departmental Committee similar to that which

considers applications for light railways. All applications for grants for harbours are to be put before this Committee to see whether they come within the limits laid down which would justify the Treasury in granting assistance. The honourable Member for Forfarshire alluded to Auchmithie. I understand that the application is for a very small sum of money, £400 or £500. It seemed to us that that application should rather be made to the Scottish Fishery Board than to our Board. I do not remember for the moment what the answer of the Scottish Board was, but the application will be dealt with by the Committee to which I have referred. I am unable to give the honourable Gentleman any idea as to the expense of the applications, but the expense of those made to the Board of Trade is very small. I will, however, make inquiry, and see what can be done. The Member for East Aberdeenshire spoke of two applications to the Light Railway Commissioners. The honourable Gentleman knows that the difficulty does not lie with the Board of Trade, but with the Great North of Scotland Railway. My honourable Friend talked as if some private persons had promoted a Bill, and then handed it over to the railway company which was rather interested in not going on with it.

MR. BRYCE: The private promoters were going on with the scheme when the Great North of Scotland said they would go on with it, and then the private promoters withdrew their scheme.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: They did not exactly withdraw their scheme. As I understand it, the name of the Great Northern Railway Company was substituted in the Order for that of private promoters. The delay has certainly not lain with the Board of Trade. I do not know that it is any part of the duty of the Board of Trade to insist on these orders being carried out if the promoters do not wish to proceed. I will, however, see whether the matter cannot be brought to a focus one way or the other. The right honourable Member for Aberdeen alluded to what he considered a defect in the Light Railways Act in regard to where competition would come in. I have seen one or two cases in which it seemed rather hard that the

provisions of the Act should prevent an Order being made; but there have been cases in which it was clear that the object of the application was competition. The clause of the Act is very specific. If there is to be competition the promoters must proceed in the usual way by a Bill in the House. I do not think it would be wise just now to amend an Act which is working extremely satisfactorily. I have always considered that the right honourable Gentleman and myself are pioneers in this undertaking, and that I have only carried out what he had so well begun. We are immensely indebted to the Light Railway Commissioners who have so generously and disinterestedly given their valuable services to the country in this matter.

On the return of the CHAIRMAN, after the usual interval—

Motion made, and Question proposed—

“That Item (A) Salaries be reduced by £50, in respect of the Salary of the President of the Board of Trade.”—(*Mr. Havelock Wilson.*)

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON moved to reduce the salary of the President of the Board of Trade by £50. The question he wished to bring before the Committee was one of considerable importance, as he had to complain very much indeed of the right honourable Gentleman's conduct with regard to the manning of British ships. In 1894 the late Mr. Mundella appointed a Committee, and for over two years that Committee gathered evidence from seamen, engineers, shipowners, and others interested in the mercantile marine. It was a very representative Committee, and in the end they reported that in their opinion a large number of British ships were seriously undermanned, and that it was necessary that legislation should be passed to prevent undermanning, on the ground that it was dangerous to send ships to sea without sufficient crews. Out of 17 members of that Committee 13 signed the majority report, and two of them were representatives of the Board of Trade. They complained not only of the insufficient number of men employed on the decks, but also that the stokehole and firemen's department was not sufficiently manned; and they drafted a scale which provided that no

fireman should work more than 2½ tons of coal in tropical climates and not more than three tons in cold climates. The Committee did their work thoroughly well, and he had not heard the right honourable Gentleman complain in any way during the discussion with regard to the legislation passed that the Committee had not done their work thoroughly well. The right honourable Gentleman was moved to bring in a Bill by which he declared that ships were undermanned. That Bill did not go quite so far as he should have liked, but he did not object to it, for he recognised that under the Bill it would become the duty of the President of the Board of Trade and his officials to draft a scale giving out instructions as to when a ship was sufficiently manned.

Attention having been called to the fact that there were not 40 Members present, the House was counted, when 40 Members being present—

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (continuing) said the Manning Committee drafted a scale which was not entirely to his satisfaction, but it was a very light scale indeed; but he recognised that it was better to have that scale than nothing at all, and he agreed to it. When the Manning Act was passed, the power was left to the President of the Board of Trade to draw up instructions as to the number of officers, superintendents, and surveyors, but to his amazement and to the astonishment of all men connected with the shipping trade, the President of the Board of Trade had thrown overboard all the recommendations of the Manning Committee, and had drafted a scale even worse than that recommended by the minority report of the Manning Committee, which was signed by four, all of them shipowners. They recommended that no ships should go to sea with less than three deck hands in each watch, and that the watches should be so arranged as to have always one competent man at the wheel. The work of the Manning Committee cost something like £30,000, and all they had got from the Board of Trade was contained in a shabby little leaflet, containing instructions which, he ventured to say, no one could understand. Those instructions provided that foreign-going steamships

President of the Board of Trade.

over 200 ft. in length and not less than 700 tons gross when proceeding to sea should have, independently of the master and two mates, a sufficient number of deck hands available for division into two watches, so as to provide a minimum effective watch with a competent hand at the wheel, a look-out man, and an additional hand on deck available for any purpose. That instruction only applied to foreign-going steamships, and did not include vessels sailing on the coast. It did not matter what size the vessel might be. She might be a vessel carrying 4,000 tons of cargo, but if she had got three hands—and there was nothing to specify in the instructions whether they should be able seamen or ordinary seamen—it would be quite sufficient. That was not the worst part of the business, for many of the vessels that were now carrying those hands and were foreign-going vessels when they commenced their voyage two of the men were put to work during the day, and in the night time they slept in all night. That left only two hands in each watch to do the work, so that many of those vessels during the night had no one on the look-out; and he had called the attention of the right honourable Gentleman that day to a case where no look-out was kept, and in consequence of this they were running short-handed, and, by putting two men to sleep in all night, they were not taking any part in the navigation of the ship. The reply of the right honourable Gentleman was that in this case there was a fault of discipline of not having a proper look-out, but, as the collision was not attended with material damage or loss of life, a Court of Inquiry would have no power to deal with the officer's certificate, and, under the circumstances, he did not propose to take any further steps in the matter. He never asked the right honourable Gentleman to take any action against the captains or the officers, for they were not responsible. If a vessel left a port in the United Kingdom without a sufficient number of men to constitute the crew and to navigate her with proper care, the responsibility should not be thrown upon the officers of a ship, but upon the ship-owners. He wanted to know where the fault of discipline was. The men had got their work to do on board ship, and

it was a common occurrence when a vessel left with a cargo of coals to have the holds of the ship swept and cleaned out, and this was generally done by taking one man out of each watch, and the officer in the daytime, instead of being on the bridge looking after the navigation of the vessel, was employed with those two men in the hold of the vessel, cleaning it up ready to take in the cargo. The Board of Trade had had their attention called to this matter more than once, and, if they wanted to satisfy themselves as to whether it was a common occurrence, they would find, by turning to the evidence given before the Manning Committee, that quite a large number of witnesses, both officers and seamen, testified to this very common practice of running ships without any proper look-out at all.

***THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE:** Does the honourable Gentleman say that this particular ship was undermanned?

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: Yes.

***THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE:** How does he know that? Does he know the number of men on board?

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: Certainly.

***THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE:** Let us have it, then.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said the vessel he alluded to carried six able seamen and 2,000 tons of cargo. He did not say that, according to the Board of Trade instructions, the vessel was not sufficiently manned, but the point he was complaining of was that the vessel was not sufficiently manned from a practical seaman's point of view, and he hoped the right honourable Gentleman would not misunderstand him on that point. The right honourable Gentleman must know that a ship must be undermanned if they have to take a man away from the navigation of the vessel to do the work which those men were doing.

***THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE:** How does the honourable Gentleman know that men were taken

from the look-out to do other work! Does he know what work they were put to?

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON replied that he put the question to the right honourable Gentleman because the complaint was made to him by a seaman who had served in the vessel, and that was the ground of his argument.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Let the honourable Gentleman state what work they were taken from and what work they were put to.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said he was afraid the right honourable Gentleman desired to be furnished with too many particulars, and he did not see what he had got to make such a large noise about. It was sufficient for him to know that one able seaman was taken cut of each watch to be employed during the daytime painting and clearing out the hold, and, consequently, in the night-time, instead of having three hands in each watch, there was only two seamen in each watch, and therefore a proper look-out was not kept on board that ship. That was not the only case.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Let us have them.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said he would give them if the right honourable Gentleman would not be in a hurry, for he had come well armed with ammunition, and the right honourable Gentleman would not have the opportunity of saying upon this occasion what he said last year, that he had taken advantage of him by failing to give him proper notice of the matters he intended to bring up. He had furnished the President of the Board of Trade with a list of the questions with which he intended to deal, and he did not think he would have any cause of complaint on that score. He complained, in one instance, that a vessel was carrying passengers which was not registered to carry passengers, and he was informed in reply that the vessel in question, "The Tuscan Prince," carried no passengers during February and March, that it held no passenger certificate, and carried no surgeon. The owner stated that two lifeboats were on board, and that when

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she left Plymouth she carried seven able seamen, and of these six were British and one Greek. They might have furnished a little more information and stated that when she arrived at Plymouth six Greeks belonging to the crew were sent to prison in Plymouth because they refused to proceed any further with the ship because she was unseaworthy, and six Britishers were shipped in their place. He wanted the Board of Trade to inquire a little further into this matter, and he relied upon that statement made to him by the crew of that vessel. He was told that they carried 100 pilgrims, and he wanted the Board of Trade to inquire how a vessel without a passenger certificate was allowed to carry passengers, because pilgrims were not cattle, and would come under the category of passengers. This vessel carried passengers without any Board of Trade certificate, and he should like the right honourable Gentleman to inquire whether that statement was correct or not, for he gave it on the authority of one of the seamen. His complaint was one of general overwork in consequence of the vessel being shorthanded. If the right honourable Gentleman's instructions had been in accordance with what was recommended by a Committee well qualified to deal with the question, and recommended by two of his own Departmental officers, he could not understand, when the regulations actually came to be framed, why the opinions of those officers were thrown overboard. They signed the majority report, and they fully recognised that the scale framed by the Manning Committee was a very moderate one, but the opinion of the minority had evidently been accepted, and the opinion of the two Departmental officers ignored altogether. With regard to the manner in which this scale had to be carried out, the instructions provide—

"In case of any such vessel lodging articles of agreement, and failing to have six deck hands in addition to the master and two mates, the superintendent or deputy-superintendent should draw the master's attention to the fact, and immediately report the case in writing to the resident detaining officer or surveyor to the Board of Trade."

He did not understand how the Board of Trade Department could draft such an instruction as that. It was a very common occurrence for vessels to arrive

in the Tyne and in Cardiff at 12 o'clock in the day, only calling for bunkers. They discharged their crew and engaged another crew to be on board the vessel at five o'clock at night. How was the superintendent to have time or opportunity to communicate with the detaining officer? He would further like to call the attention of the right honourable Gentleman to the fact that many deputies who signed on crews were merely young fellows of 18 or 19 years of age, with no experience whatever of shipping matters. He had himself examined the articles of one of the Prince Liners, and he found no stipulation whatever in the articles of agreement as to the number of men that should be carried. There was a place in the articles were it stated that so many of the crew should be retained as able-bodied seamen, but in this particular case there was no provision made at all as to the number that should constitute the crew, and he had no doubt this was due to the way in which the crew had been signed on before one of these young deputy-superintendents. Coming to another Department, he should like to know why the recommendations of the Manning Committee with regard to the stokehole department were thrown overboard, and why were their instructions disregarded? Did the right honourable Gentleman know that in consequence of firemen being overworked in tropical climates that it was a very common occurrence for those men to commit suicide through being overheated, or does he mean to say that such cases do not occur? This was a very serious matter indeed for firemen, for very often only three or four were signed on, and they did not know what sort of a ship it was until they got on board, and after they had once commenced work, it did not matter how laborious it might be, they were compelled to go on to the end of the voyage or else be thrown into prison for refusing duty. If there was anything in connection with labour which required regulating he ventured to say that it was the position of these firemen on board ship. One evil was this—that in a large number of vessels the engine-room department was so short-handed that the engineers very often took two or three firemen from the stokehole and put them into the engine-room to do greasing work. That caused no end of

trouble, for the taking of men out of the stokehole to do other work imposed more work upon the other firemen, and the result was that they refused duty, and were put into prison for it, and then people come forward in this House and talked about the bad conduct of British firemen. In connection with the firemen's department there were what were called field days. That meant extra work on the homeward passage after the men had done their four to six hours on the fires, when they were called upon to do painting, scrubbing, and cleaning out engine-rooms, instead of resting. After a man had done four or five hours' firing it was positively cruel and disgusting to ask that man, instead of having his rest, to go and do cleaning in the engine-room. There was a case in point happened in Glasgow. On the Sunday morning these men were called upon to do this kind of work. They were quite willing to do their usual turn on the fires, but not the field days. The result was that they were brought before the court and fined two days' pay for refusing duty on Sunday. He took the case to another court, where it was tried by one of those worthy Glasgow sheriffs whom he thought were great Sabbatarians and would uphold the Sabbath at any cost. It appeared, however, that there was no Sabbath for sailors or firemen, and this worthy sheriff said they had refused to do their ordinary work and that the commands of the master must be obeyed, no matter what they were. In Liverpool a few days ago 10 or 12 sailors were sentenced to seven days' imprisonment for a similar offence. Now, what did the right honourable Gentleman do? Did he make any provision for this state of things in this shabby little scale? No; the Board of Trade ignored the firemen entirely, and no provision was made for this class of work. He desired to ask why they had ignored the recommendation of the Manning Committee that firemen should not work more than two and a half tons of coal during each 24 hours in tropical climates? Did the right honourable Gentleman think they should do more than that? Very often they were compelled to do more, with the result that many of them were driven out of their minds entirely. The Returns of the Registrar-General proved his case up to the hilt on that point. No provision was made with regard to the coasting vessels. With regard to this

question he did not know whether the right honourable Gentleman's officers reported or not, but he himself had reported cases to the Department. He called the right honourable Gentleman's attention to a vessel of over 700 tons and 200ft. in length that was only carrying four hands. His reply was that the Board of Trade did not consider that this vessel was undermanned. The same vessel formerly used to carry six or seven hands, but she was now running with only four, and yet, in the opinion of the Board of Trade, this vessel was well and sufficiently manned. There had been a great number of inquiries appointed by the Board of Trade, and they had actually condemned other ships as unseaworthy and undermanned of the same tonnage which only carried four hands. After citing a number of inquiries appointed by the Board of Trade which had decided that vessels were not sufficiently manned with four or five able seamen, he said that in spite of these findings the Board of Trade issued an instruction which went far beyond what the courts had already found. The High Courts had condemned in this country cases where they had only four able seamen on board. What were four able seamen to man a vessel of seven or eight hundred tons? As long as he could remember even the colliers trading round the coast had six or seven able seamen, but the same boats running to-day were only carrying four. Had there been any great change in the labour-saving appliances? The only change effected was that many of those vessels which used to carry yards on the foremast very seldom used those yards, and they had now been taken down. That was the only change made, and yet those vessels were now running with four hands although they used to carry six or seven. He had sent a long letter to the Board of Trade with regard to the General Steam Navigation Company's boats sailing from London, which were not carrying six hands because the Board of Trade instructions allowed them to run with less than six, and the shipowner was not going to put on more hands than were necessary. He wished to ask, Was it fair to the owners of fully-manned vessels like those owned by the Great Eastern Railway Company to allow other ships to endanger the lives of their passengers and crew by running around the ocean undermanned in this way? He knew

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why this was done, for it was the Federation's business. The Shipping Federation had got charge of the Board of Trade now and everyone connected with it. Those regulations were practically the recommendations of the minority of the Manning Committee, only much worse; and the right honourable Gentleman's advisers brought forward this document, which was not creditable to the Board of Trade. He wanted to know if they were to continue to risk lives by allowing ships to go undermanned in this way? He had put questions to the right honourable Gentleman in regard to an accident which occurred on board a collier running round the coast which came into Tilbury dock. She was short-handed, and only had five hands, and two of them were in the boat with the lines. That left three hands on deck. Now, if there had been another hand on board to gather in the slack of this deck rope the accident would not have happened. The result was that while this unfortunate man was doing this work single-handed his leg got into one of the coils and was cut off, and he died the next day. In a similar accident not long ago a sailor had both his legs cut right off. He had asked the right honourable Gentleman whether he intended to hold any inquiry with regard to the death of these two men. There had been a coroner's inquest, and the jury said that in their opinion if there had been another man there the accident would not have happened. He had asked the President of the Board of Trade if he intended to take any further action with regard to these cases, and he had replied that he did not intend to institute proceedings. It was not correct that the widow had received £25 from the shipowner, although she had been offered £5 by a clergyman, for the owners had not had the courtesy to communicate with the woman herself directly. But they had sent a clergyman or curate several times to make very impetinent inquiries as to what she was going to do, and this clergyman offered to leave £5, which the woman refused to have, because they intended to fix the responsibility upon the shipowner for the death of this man. Nevertheless, the responsibility rested with the Board of Trade, because if they had carried out the recommendations of the Manning Committee there would have been more men on board this ship, and that accident

would, in all probability, not have occurred. And when he asked the Board of Trade to institute further inquiry they refused. And why? Was a sailor's life not as valuable as any other life? He ventured to say that if an accident occurred in a mine, and a question was put to the Home Secretary, in which it appeared from the circumstances that the management was to blame, there would be an inquiry at once. Of course, miners had got votes, and sailors had not, and consequently they had no political influence. The circumstances were such as to justify an inquiry being held; and he could go on for some considerable time quoting cases of this kind, but he thought he had said sufficient to prove to all fair-minded men that the seamen had not had justice done to them by the right honourable Gentleman, because he had not carried out the recommendations of the Manning Committee, when 13 members out of 17 signed the majority report, and two of them were Board of Trade officials holding very high and responsible positions, and who, he thought, were the principal advisers of the President of the Board of Trade. Their recommendations had been entirely ignored, and the inquiry held by this Committee, which cost the country so much money, might as well never have been held at all. And why was this? Simply because the shipowners had got such great influence, and they were able to control the Government Department. The shipowners were able to use scurrilous abuse through the columns of their so-called papers in defaming the President of the Board of Trade and the permanent officials of his Department. He had read very often with disgust the abuse levelled against the right honourable Gentleman and his Department by those shipowners' papers. There was some very nasty things indeed which had been said with regard to the right honourable Gentleman in those shipowners' papers, and if seamen's papers had dared to make such charges they would have been very quickly condemned, and there would have been quite a storm. The right honourable Gentleman and his officials had been described as "barnacles of the Board of Trade," as leeches, and as parasites. Those were the little soft names which they were being called by the respectable shipowners' journals, which were financed by men of education and position. The seamen's papers

had never got down to that level yet, and what he had to say he would say with courtesy and respect, and if he did hit out he hoped he would hit out in a straightforward manner without giving any undue offence. He would now leave the manning question and come to another matter with which the right honourable Gentleman and himself had had considerable difference of opinion. He referred to the accommodation of their friends the lascars on board British ships. The last time he ventured to argue this point with the right honourable Gentleman he lost his temper, and he trusted that upon this occasion he would not do so. For several years he had called the attention of the President of the Board of Trade to the fact that certain shipping companies, and principally one of the wealthiest in the country—the P. and O. Company—had robbed the seamen of their proper accommodation. Last year the reply of the Board of Trade was that this was a very important matter, which was receiving their attention, and it was stated that they were in correspondence with their legal advisers upon the matter. That was last August, and yet they had not received the legal opinion of the Attorney-General. He had read the law very carefully, and he might tell the right honourable Gentleman that the Imperial Merchant Shippings Act applied to all vessels registered in the United Kingdom. He had been told by an eminent legal gentleman that no legal man worth his salt would give an opinion opposite to that which he had just stated. He had asked for a Return of the correspondence that had passed between the Board of Trade and the P. and O. Company, and also with the Secretary for India, but he could not have a copy. Now, what were the complaints made in 1893 and 1894? Mr. Penny, a shipwright surveyor, was called upon to inspect these vessels, and in his report he said that the stench was so abominable that for some time he was not able to complete the survey, and he reported that the accommodation for these lascars was not sufficient. How was it that the P. and O. Company could run their boats without proper accommodation? When should they get at the end of this business with regard to the lascars? He could promise the Committee that as long as there was any uncertainty about the matter, and as long as the Board of

Trade failed to enforce what he considered to be the law he should never fail to take every opportunity of calling attention to this subject. He did not only complain of the lascars, but also with regard to the vessels trading on the coast. He had drawn attention to a British vessel sailing on the Thames where the crew had only 52 cubic feet of space, and the fore-castle was only some 4ft. 5in. high. Now, that vessel had been passed by a Board of Trade surveyor, and he wanted to know how that came about, for this official had definite instructions to see that there must be 72 cubic feet of accommodation and 6ft. from deck to deck. He had many other cases, but he did not want to take up more time upon that point. He thought he had said sufficient to satisfy the Committee that there was something radically wrong, and that it was about time that it was put right. His own opinion was that these surveyors were subjected to pressure by the shipbuilders, many of whom were shipowners, and if one of these Board of Trade officers got too busy, insisting upon what was right, he was told that he was too interfering and was removed to some other place where he would not be quite so busy. He had said already that the Shipping Federation had taken charge of the Board of Trade. A deputation waited upon the right honourable Gentleman the other day from the shipowners, asking that the Shipping Federation officials should be granted the privilege of having licences to engage and supply seamen. It was represented to the right honourable Gentleman that all the Federation officials were experienced captains, masters, and, in fact, quite a competent lot of men. He might say that the principal Federation official was an ex-inspector of police, and was never on board a ship in his life. Another of their officials was a dock labourer, another a butcher, and two of their officials at Middlesbrough were recently discharged for being drunk and receiving money from seamen. The seamen alleged that they had been blackmailed by some of the Federation officials who were now holding positions in that organisation, and yet the right honourable Gentleman said he could not understand why the shipowners, in their collective capacity, should not have the power to engage and supply those men. Why had they a

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Board of Trade at all? Why ask this Committee to vote thousands of pounds to maintain a mercantile marine office in the principal ports with a staff of superintendents and deputies and outdoor officials whose business it was to look after the engagement and the supply of seamen? Why engage all this staff if they intended to hand the business over to the Shipping Federation? He would rather the President of the Board of Trade say, "We will dispense with the whole business, and give you the right to sign the men on and discharge them in your own office." He knew what this would mean to the sailors when those men got their licences. They would be able to do what they did during the recent dispute in Glasgow, when they employed all kinds of crimps under the disguise of a licence to engage and supply men. Another remarkable case was that in which a young Russian serving aboard a Russian steamer was persuaded by one of the Federation officials to desert. He did desert his ship, and was sent on to Glasgow, put aboard the "Duchess of York," and shipped as a fireman, although he never did a day's firing in his life. It was reported to the Board of Trade, but no action was taken, because the Federation denied the evidence, although the men who signed the statement were prepared to testify to the truth of it on oath. The Board of Trade did not take any action because it was afraid to disturb the friends of the Shipping Federation. All he wanted was fair play between man and master, and if the right honourable Gentleman granted licences to those Shipping Federation officials he would make a serious blunder indeed. He reported another shameful case to the right honourable Gentleman. A steward at South Shields, who had 30 years' experience, was told by one of the Federation officials of a ship that wanted a steward. He went to the Federation office and saw Captain Robinson, the Superintendent, who gave him a letter to the captain of the ship, which, however, was not to recommend him for the berth, because it said that Captain Robinson did not know the man, although he had a Federation ticket and a good discharge, adding that he had a good steward whom he would send along later. That was contemptible meanness. Of course, Captain Robinson had some

friend in view who was prepared to give a bigger fee for the privilege of getting him the appointment, and he gave the man a cowardly letter which practically told the captain not to employ him. Was Captain Robinson about to be supplied with a licence by the right honourable Gentleman? Mr. Lawes was questioned about the matter, but all he said was that Captain Robinson had no experience; but if he had no experience he had no right to occupy the position he did. The next matter had regard to continuous discharges. The right honourable Gentleman had promised shipowners that seamen should have continuous discharges, and the right honourable Gentleman said to the deputation that there was one thing he would insist upon, and that was that there should be reference in the continuous discharge to character, conduct, and ability. What did it matter to the right honourable Gentleman whether seamen had continuous discharges or certificates? On the continuous discharge would be recorded the name of the ship, the date the seaman joined the vessel, and the date of his discharge, but the right honourable Gentleman proposed to go further, and to give the captain the privilege of entering on the discharge a reference to the man's character, whether it was good, bad, or indifferent. Seamen did not object to continuous discharges, provided there was no reference to character, conduct, and ability. He could see a smile on the right honourable Gentleman's face, but he would not object to continuous discharges if sailors and firemen were given the right, whenever a captain gave them bad discharges and if they felt aggrieved, to have the case properly tried on its merits by some tribunal—either a Board of Trade Committee or some other Committee. But what the right honourable Gentleman proposed was that the captain should have the sole right to decide whether a man's conduct was good or bad. He would give one or two cases to show how dangerous that was. A short time ago the steamer named the "Star of Victoria" arrived in London. The firemen had been asked to do field days during the voyage. They did two, but were called upon to do three and objected. Those men had excellent characters from the same captain on the previous voyage. On their refusal he said that they refused duty, and he en-

tered the offence in the official log-book. When the ship arrived the men were served with summonses to appear at the West Ham Police Court, charged with disobeying the lawful commands of the master. He took up the case for the men. The magistrate dismissed the case, and ordered the captain to pay the men five days' wages. It was evident that the captain was in the wrong, but in order to have revenge on the men he declined to report on their character, although he had given them splendid discharges on the previous voyage. If the continuous discharges which the right honourable Gentleman proposed were in force the entry would have been made that the captain declined to report on character or conduct. Was that fair treatment? He had another case in hand. Some men signed a six months' agreement. After 2½ months the captain told them they might take five days off, but at the end of another voyage he wanted to deduct the wages for those days. The matter was submitted to the shipping master, and he decided in favour of the men, whereupon the captain declined to report. If the men had had continuous discharges that would have been entered against them, although they had not been guilty of any offence, and they would have had trouble in securing employment. If the right honourable Gentleman would only provide some court where seamen when treated in such a shameful manner would have a right to appear, he promised the right honourable Gentleman his support for continuous discharges; but it would be a shameful thing if the captain had the sole right without appeal of giving a man a character. It might be said that it was only troublesome British seamen who caused difficulties, but it happened that the men on the "Star of Victoria" were foreigners, and the men in the last case mentioned were foreigners also. The right honourable Gentleman was going to appoint a Departmental Committee. Why a Departmental Committee? Why not a Committee of the House of Commons? If they had a Committee of the House of Commons they should be able to bring sufficient evidence before it that would justify it in deciding in favour of the reforms which he was suggesting. But the right honourable Gentleman was to have a Departmental Committee composed of officials, who might be very

good men in their way, but who would be certain to decide in favour of the right honourable Gentleman's idea, whether it was good, bad, or indifferent. If they had a Committee of the House of Commons both shipowners and seamen could be represented, and evidence could be taken. There was another matter which they did not appear to get any further with, and that was the Consular Shipping Office in New York. In March 1899 he called the right honourable Gentleman's attention to the state of affairs that existed in that office, and the right honourable Gentleman stated that if his statement were true that state of affairs would be put an end to at once. His statement had not been disproved up to now. During the time he was in New York, what he saw in that office was enough to bring the blush of shame to any man who called himself a Britisher. He asked the Committee to imagine a small room filled with the vilest crimps and robbers who, when sailors got their money, snatched it out of their hands, and asked them to follow them and settle up elsewhere. When I called the attention of the right honourable Gentleman to the matter he said it would be immediately remedied. What had been done since? Nothing but correspondence. He had a letter from the crew of the ship "Aladdin," which would give some idea of the kind of business transacted in the Consular Office in New York—

"Dear Sir,—Knowing the interest you take in the treatment and shipping of seamen, I beg to send you the following statement on behalf of the crew 'Aladdin.' We signed on in New York on the 22nd of last July, agreeing to work 90 days, the boarding master getting 50 dollars, or £10 8s. 4d., in lieu of advance, a shilling to be due to us at the end of the said number of days. We came on board next morning, the vessel lying in the river. Most of us were only two or three days ashore. We were to be settled up with as soon as we got on board; but it was the old, old story—that settling up never came. There was not one man amongst us who had got from the boarding master more than the value of £2, and we had to pay £8 8s. 4d. for nothing. The shipping master Brennan received £2 1s. 8d. for taking our names and sending us on to the Consul to sign. If we speak while in that gentleman's office we are stopped from shipping and turned out, being told that we have got too much to say, though we may pay 10 dollars for it. We were told that this ship was going to Calcutta, but when we got on board we found it was going to Java. In consequence of this and the way we were treated some of us refused to work until we saw the Consul or someone acting for him. The night before we sailed a tug-boat came alongside, having on board a crowd of

boarding masters, and Mr. Brennan's (shipping-master) clerk. As soon as they got on board they started to use some of the worst language that it was ever my lot to hear, and I have heard some choice expressions in my day. Some of those gentlemen were visibly under the influence of drink. They called on us with curses and threats to come aft, and they would soon settle whatever was the matter with us. We went aft, but we could see from the first what it was going to be. Brennan's clerk said that he came aboard on behalf of the Consul. We stated our troubles before him and the chief officer of the ship, and after some talk they and the boarding masters promised to let us have what we required next morning, some of us being without oilskins, blankets, and most other articles one requires at sea. One of the men, namely, Hermann Surensen, had been very sick since he came on board, and he went into the cabin to ask to see a doctor. One of the boarding masters, John Humphrey, called in one of the runners, and in the presence of our chief mate, the steward, and some of the crew, he said, 'Here is the doctor, he will cure you quickly.' The runner then struck him a violent blow on the face, and said, 'Get forward, you son of a b——,' and this man's eye was black and bruised for several weeks after. After this noble piece of work they took their departure, the loudest of them all being the gentleman who acted on behalf of the British Consul. The most of our crew are married men, and have families dependent on them. Now, you know, as you have been across here, that there is no protection for the sailor either ashore or aboard, or even in the Consular office. The boarding masters, runners, etc., are allowed to enter there as well as seamen. Hoping you will have this matter taken before the proper authority, I remain, yours truly, JAMES O'MAHONY, A.B."

That letter was signed by 14 of the crew. He sent it to the Board of Trade, and the Consul-General having been communicated with, said he never heard anything about the matter, that the men were signed on in the usual way, and that they made no complaint. But they had no chance of making a complaint. They asked to see the Consul and a lot of ruffians were brought off in a tug boat and one of the men was brutally assaulted. When he protested in the name of British seamen to the Vice-Consul at New York he was told that those men were in the Office to represent the seamen's interests. He could not understand the delay on the part of the Government. If they were not satisfied let them send one of their officials to New York to inquire into the matter. Let them inquire of Mr. Johnson, solicitor, of New York, who had taken the greatest possible interest in the case of seamen, and who had protested more than once to the British Consul. He would tell the right honour-

Mr. Havlock Wilson.

able Gentleman that it was not only in New York that it was complained of, but in nearly every port in America the business was conducted in the same way. He wanted to know when they were likely to get these defects remedied. They were not likely to be set right by correspondence. If the right honourable Gentleman said he had no jurisdiction over British Consuls, the Foreign Office had, and the Foreign Office ought to interfere. It was the duty of the right honourable Gentleman to urge the Foreign Office to take action. Again, was it true that provisions condemned as unfit for use were turned over and placed upon other vessels going to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean? He had been informed, on reliable authority, that provisions which had been condemned on vessels bound through the Suez Canal and round the Cape of Good Hope as unfit for use had been transferred. If this were true, had the Board of Trade inspectors no power in such cases to order the goods to be destroyed? He urged the Department to do something in the way of appointing a larger number of nautical surveyors. At the present moment there was only one nautical surveyor in all Scotland who had any knowledge of the storage of cargo and the general outfit of a ship, and the result was that at ports like Burntisland nearly every foreign vessel went out overloaded. Moreover, there were a number of comparatively speaking large ports where there were no surveyors of any kind. Burntisland was a port where a large number of foreign ships loaded. They were allowed to load deeper, they carried cargo cheaper, and had consequently driven British vessels pretty well out of the port. He desired to know if the right honourable Gentleman intended making any provision for the appointment of a Board of Trade official to look after those ports. The nearest Board of Trade officer to Goole was the officer at Hull, who had no opportunity whatever of looking after the ships which loaded in the port of Goole. He thought some steps should be taken by the Board of Trade to appoint more officials. He urged that the medical officers of the Board ought to be treated with more respect and consideration, and ought not to be compelled to send their Reports to the shipwright and nautical surveyors before they were submitted to the Board

of Trade. They should be allowed to send up their reports direct. But the most serious charge that could be brought against the Board of Trade was in connection with the alteration of the North Atlantic winter load line. They all knew how Mr. Plimsoll fought in that House to secure justice for the seamen, and the establishment of a load line. It was after a great struggle and a stormy scene in the House of Commons that a load line was passed, and he believed all respectable and honest shipowners blessed the day when that Act came into force. But there were those who were prepared to sacrifice human life for profit, and were not satisfied with a dividend of even 45 per cent. The shipowners had taken the advantage of having a friend in office to get the North Atlantic winter load line altered. The right honourable Gentleman called the Committee together to consider the question, and, though the shipbuilders, shipowners, and insurance companies were all represented on the Committee, the right honourable Gentleman had refused to allow the officers and seamen to be represented. That Committee had received evidence, but the evidence had never been published, though the alteration in the load line had been made. He hoped the House would insist on this evidence being published. What had been the result of the change? Had it made ships safer? No! In less than four weeks during the last winter eight large steamers foundered in the Atlantic, and 320 lives were lost. When would the Board of Trade inquire into the loss of these vessels?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Will the honourable Member give the names of the vessels?

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said he could not give all the names right off, but could give a few.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Let us have a few of them.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said that at the moment he could not give the names. Surely no honourable Member disputed his word in face of the reports which had appeared in the newspapers! He could not believe that honourable Members took so little interest in shipping matters that they were not aware of the fact that eight ships had foundered in the Atlantic Ocean during the months of January and February.

What was the object of the right honourable Gentleman in asking for the names? Was it not the right honourable Gentleman's duty to know the names of the ships?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: The honourable Gentleman has stated that certain alterations have been made in the load line, and that in consequence of that alteration 320 lives have been lost.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: No.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Then what does the honourable Member mean?

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said that was just one of the ways the right honourable Gentleman had of endeavouring to turn the tables against him. He never suggested that any of the eight ships were lost in consequence of the alteration of the freeboard. What he did say was that eight ships foundered, and over 300 lives had been lost, and that, in view of the danger, the freeboard ought to have been levelled up instead of down. He asked again why no inquiries had been held into the loss of these ships. Was it because the Board of Trade thought the matter not worth inquiring into? When eight vessels disappeared about the same time there should be a special inquiry, because it was evident that there must be something radically wrong with the loading and building of those ships. There were many other matters to which he desired to call attention, but he felt he had already taken up more time of the House of Commons than he was justified in doing; but the matters to which he had referred were of such importance that he felt he would not be doing his duty to the men he represented if he did not avail himself of every opportunity the Rules of the House afforded in order to bring these questions forward. He hoped the right honourable Gentleman would give his consideration to the questions raised, and concluded by moving to reduce the Vote by £50.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: Mr. Lowther, the honourable Member has accused the Board of Trade and myself of attempting to undo Mr. Plimsoll's work without proper inquiry, and of altering the freeboard in a way which has unduly reduced the margin of safety which previously existed; and he then proceeded to give what I

thought, and what the Committee thought, were illustrations of the evils which had followed the alteration of the load line. If I had not challenged the honourable Member, the Committee would have been under the impression that these 320 lives had been lost in ships in consequence of this alteration. The honourable Member asked how it happened that these vessels were all lost about the same time. The North Atlantic passage in winter is a dangerous one, and there have been some terrific gales during the last winter. That is the way I account for the unhappy loss of lives that has occurred; but to connect this disaster with the alteration of the load line is an outrage. There is no connection between the two matters. The number of British ships lost with all hands in the North Atlantic last winter was nine. The proposals of the recent Load Line Committee have been given effect to, but there is no reason whatever to believe that any one of these missing steamers had not sufficient freeboard. Four out of the nine were bound by the new regulations of which the honourable Member complained, and had two inches more freeboard than were formerly required, while of the remaining five one had two inches more, and one had five inches more clear side than the old Rules required. These were the vessels in which the lives were lost to which the honourable Member referred, and to which he has connected the alteration in the load line.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I repudiate that.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I am aware of that, but if I had not called upon the honourable Member for an explanation, the Committee would have been left under a wrong impression. The honourable Gentleman talks about the Board of Trade having undone Plimsoll's work. Plimsoll's work had nothing to do with the fixing of the original North Atlantic winter load line or the present one. The Committee which sat in 1884 reported that the time might come when it would require to be reconsidered. There was a very anomalous state of things existing. There was a hard and fast line drawn in the North Atlantic. North of the line ships were subjected to extra freeboard; south of the line they were not; and it was alleged that ships, north and south, traversed the same course

coming across the Atlantic, which, I believe, was largely, if not entirely, true. It was complained that this was an indefensible state of things, and a Committee was appointed to consider the matter. Representations were made that the whole question of extra load line ought to be considered, that ships had altered greatly since the Report of the original Committee, and the same condition of things to which the 1884 load line applied no longer applied to many ships in 1899. Every one of the surviving Members of the Committee of 1884 was added to the Committee. Sir Francis Jeune was chairman of the Committee, and no one more capable or more desirous of safeguarding the interests of all concerned could possibly have presided over the Committee.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: Will the right honourable Gentleman explain why captains, engineers, and seamen were not represented on the Committee?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: They were not on the original Committee of 1884. Ships' architects, builders, Lloyd's Register, and representatives of various underwriting associations were on the Committee. Does the honourable Member suggest that these gentlemen, and especially the underwriting associations, are not as much interested as any seaman in ships not going to the bottom? The value of seamen on the Committee to consider an extremely technical question would have been absolutely nil. The honourable Gentleman was a witness before the Committee, and, in cross examination, he was compelled to admit that he himself knew nothing about freeboard.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I absolutely deny that, and I hope the right honourable Gentleman will not make that statement without producing the evidence to bear him out.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: The honourable Member has left me so little time to reply on the various points raised that I cannot go into the evidence. The evidence has not been published, but I will communicate with the Chairman of the Committee (Sir Francis Jeune), and if he knows no reason why the evidence should not be published, I am quite willing to publish it.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) said it was a rule of Debate that a Minister should lay

on the Table a copy of a document from which he had quoted. The right honourable Gentleman had referred to a statement alleged to have been made in evidence by the honourable Member for Middlesbrough which the honourable Member had denied.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I have not quoted, and I have offered to publish the evidence.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: In the meantime I deny the statement of the right honourable Gentleman that I said before the Committee I knew nothing about the subject.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I have the evidence here, and the answer given by the honourable Member, when asked if he had studied the Load Lines Rules, was—

"I cannot say that I have the knowledge of this matter that the Committee had who sat to inquire into it."

I am quite ready to modify my statement; I do not wish to misrepresent the honourable Member. I should have said the honourable Member admitted he was not acquainted with the technicalities of the subject.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I never said that.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I accept the denial of the honourable Member, and will proceed to deal with some of the points raised during the discussion, but the honourable Gentleman has left me so little time in which to reply that my remarks must be very brief. Upon the question of undermanning, there is a long-standing difference of opinion between myself and the honourable Member, who is in favour of a manning scale: which the Board of Trade are of opinion could not possibly be worked, having regard to the great variety of vessels and of conditions. But we did pass an Undermanning Bill, and although the honourable Member is not content with our regulations and our proceedings under that Bill, the regulations of the Board were issued after consultation with the Members of the Committee and a large number of owners and others interested in the shipping trade. I do not say there are not vessels which have got away improperly manned, but we have every reason to believe that no vessel has got away from any port with a lower manning scale than that laid down in our instructions. With

careful regard to security of life, it is necessary that owners should not be subjected to disadvantages in competition with foreign trade. There are one or two cases to which the honourable Gentleman has alluded, into which I shall be glad to inquire further if he will communicate with me. So far as lascars are concerned, it is quite true there has been considerable delay in settling this particular point. Lawyers are generally slow, and in this particular case there are a very complicated lot of statutes to be consulted. I hope before many days have passed that we shall have the matured opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown. The honourable Member has referred to several ships, but I can find no such vessel as "Sunshine" in the List, but will make inquiries. The honourable Member asks me why I am so much in favour of a continuous discharge. I think a form of continuous discharge would be a document which would be of great value to a seaman and enable him to get employment. It would be a certificate of character and good conduct, and I think if we were to omit all reference to ability and good conduct from the certificate it would largely discount its value. The matter has been referred to a Committee in which the honourable Gentleman has no confidence, but in which I have every confidence, and we will wait for the result of that Committee before coming to any conclusion. As to the reference to the Consular Office in New York, I am bound to say that I am not at all satisfied with the position of things there. We have been in communication with the Foreign Office on that subject, so as to see what can be done. The honourable Gentleman will therefore see that I am alive to the gravity of the case. With regard to the number of nautical surveyors, I shall be glad to supply the honourable Gentleman with information on that point, but I should have thought that Burntisland was not a port where a Board of Trade Inspector was required. I will, however, make some further inquiries into that matter. I am afraid I have only dealt in a perfunctory manner with the honourable Gentleman's speech, but that is necessitated by the little time he left me in which to reply to his remarks. The honourable Member is entirely mistaken when he assumes that we are actuated by any other motive than a desire to do our

utmost to protect seamen from the evils of which complaint has been made. Nothing shows more clearly that the Board of Trade is not influenced by fear of abuse than the fact that it ignores the gross and outrageous language that is used in some of the shipowners' papers against myself and the Department.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: The reply of the right honourable Gentleman on many points has been very satisfactory, and I therefore ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. WEIR criticised the action of the Board of Trade in regard to piers and harbours, and expressed the hope that special consideration would be given to poor districts in this matter. The honourable Member was proceeding to discuss the means of communication between passengers and guards, and the overcrowding of railway carriages, when

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY moved—

"That the Question be now put."

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 134; Noes 55.—(Division List No. 119.)

Original Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

And, it being after Midnight, the **CHAIRMAN** left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

House resumed.

BUSINESS DEFERRED.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Monday next.

SCHOOL BOARD CONFERENCES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday, 2nd June.

MERCHANT SEAMEN (RATING CERTIFICATES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

House adjourned at fifteen minutes after Twelve of the clock.

President of the Board of Trade.

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